Liberty

10¢

EC. 26, 1942

Christmas, 1942

SPIRIT OF '43

AMERICA *Makes the Best* OF EVERYTHING!

OUR GIFT TO FREE PEOPLES everywhere is a high spirit of sacrifice, the morale that will achieve victory.

Many a *Schenley* man has left us to do his share in the war effort; *Schenley's* distilleries are now on a war footing—turning out vast quantities of war alcohol now needed by the nation.

The *Schenley Royal Reserve* you enjoy today is drawn from our reserves—the largest in the U.S.A.—made and laid down in years gone by, and skillfully blended with finest grain neutral spirits for perfect mildness.

As in every crisis, America makes the best of everything. That is the "Spirit of '43"—and America's spirit until victory is finally achieved.

Give SCHENLEY Royal Reserve

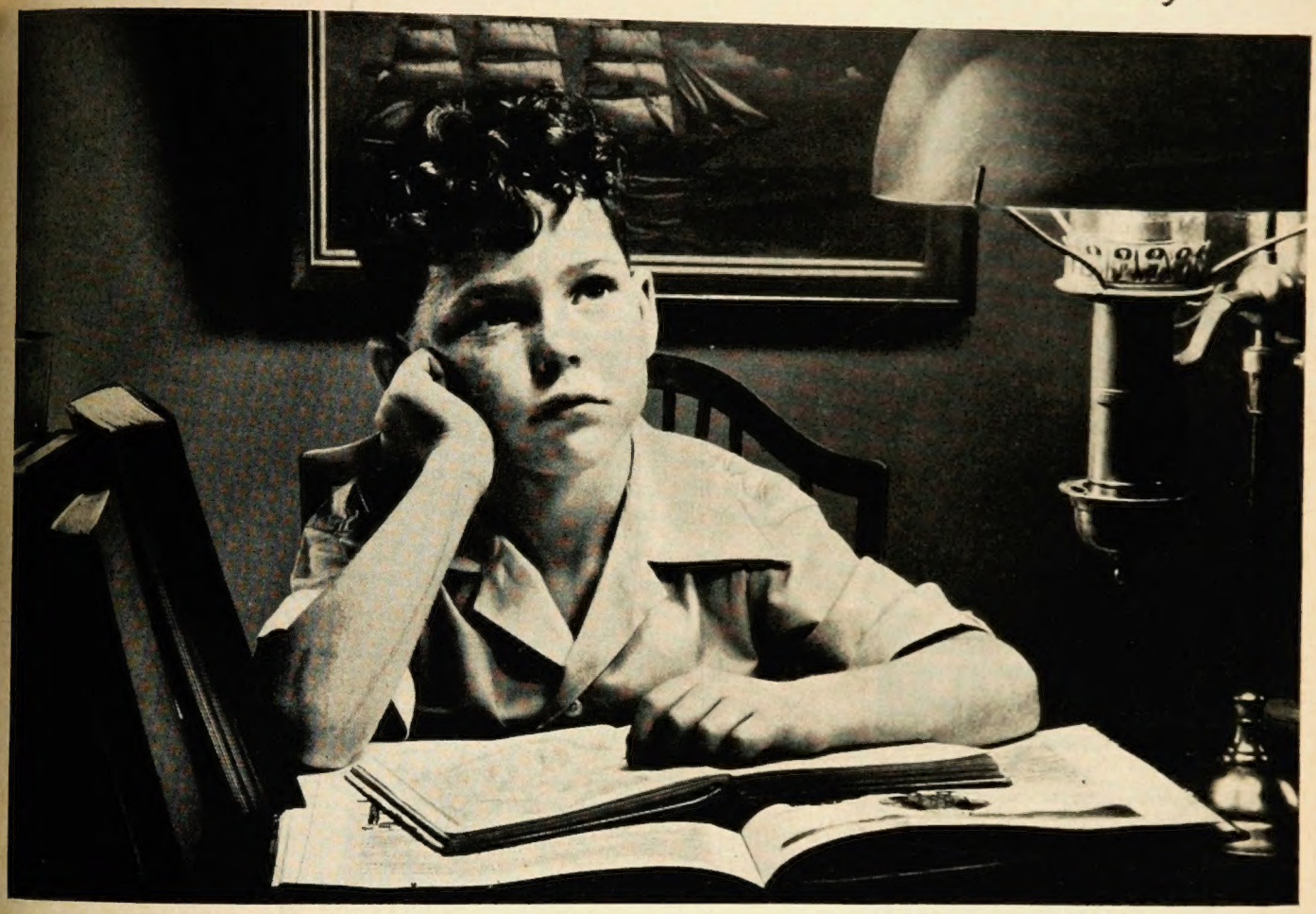
SCHENLEY ROYAL RESERVE, 60% Grain Neutral Spirits. BLENDED WHISKEY, 86 Proof.

SCHENLEY DISTILLERS CORPORATION, N. Y. C.

BUY WAR BONDS TODAY—AND EVERY DAY!

There by the Light of his Lamp He roams the Seven Seas!

Can't you see him as a Man of Tomorrow, Resolute and Dauntless as is his dream today?



We see him Strong and Reliant and Smiling— With a Smile that owes much to his Lifelong use of Ipana and Massage.

HIS COURSE is set for tomorrow—a better world that is even now taking shape. How hopeful his future is, how full of promise! For today, parents and teachers do so much to give American children the riches of health and education—to help them face the future confident and smiling!

Yes—*smiling!* For even his smile has the best of care. In classrooms* today, all over these United States, thousands of youngsters are being taught an important lesson of dental health—that firm, healthy gums are necessary to bright teeth and sparkling smiles.

These young Americans know that today's soft foods deprive our gums of work and stimulation. They know why gums tend to become soft and tender—and often signal their weakness with a tinge of "pink" on the tooth brush!

"Pink Tooth Brush" is a Warning!

If you see "pink" on your tooth brush . . . *see your dentist.* He may simply say that your gums have become tender and sensitive because of today's soft, creamy foods. And, like many modern dentists, he may suggest "the helpful stimulation of Ipana and massage."

For Ipana is designed not only to clean teeth to sparkling brightness but, with massage, to aid the gums. Massage a little Ipana onto your gums as regularly as you brush your teeth. Circulation quickens in the gums—helps them to healthier firmness. Let Ipana and massage help you to brighter teeth, firmer gums and a more sparkling smile!

Ipana Tooth Paste

Product of Bristol-Myers

In 1941 at the request of over 85,000 teachers, Ipana provided charts, teaching helps and other material for use in dental hygiene classes in American schools.

"DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES"

—so—we'll never know how many people have been killed—driving at a high rate of speed—with one hand off the wheel and their eyes off the road—TUNING RADIO!

CAR CRASHES AS DRIVER TUNES AUTO RADIO

While his attention was concentrated on tuning the car radio, the driver lost control of his automobile which struck and knocked down a light post. Driver's left leg was broken and his face cut.

(news item)

THIS HAZARD IS ELIMINATED WHEN—

your car is equipped with Zenith Foot Control Car Radio . . . you tune your radio with both hands on the wheel and both eyes on the road—a revolutionary and sensational contribution to safety. You change stations with a pressure of your left foot—you silence radio for conversation or danger the same way—and it resumes without a wait for warm-up.

ONLY ZENITH HAS THIS SAFETY FOOT CONTROL RADIO

See the Zenith Foot Control Radio on Fords (sold in 1940-41-42)—Nash (in 1940-41-42)—Mercury (in 1940-41-42)—Lincoln Zephyr (in 1940-41-42)—Hudson (in 1941-42)—Willys (in 1941-42).

Any owner of one of the above cars will gladly demonstrate. Your inspection will be a personal pre-view of post-war car radio—danger-free radio—really safe—radio.

Zenith's leadership in the radio industry has been established by a constant achievement of "firsts." Repeatedly, ideas "brand new" when Zenith "first" introduced them, later became essentials on all radios. And that same "forward thinking" of engineers and factory and organization now concentrates on war production of the thing we know—radio—exclusively radio. We are progressing—we learn every day—and this new experience will inevitably reflect itself when Zenith again produces for peace.

—a Zenith Radio Dealer near you is giving reliable service on all radios—regardless of make.

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ZENITH LONG DISTANCE RADIO

RADIO PRODUCTS EXCLUSIVELY—WORLD'S LEADING MANUFACTURER

BUY U. S. WAR BONDS & STAMPS NOW

In This Week's Liberty

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COVER BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

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Next Week

IN THE BIGGER AND BETTER

Liberty

ANOTHER FULL-LENGTH BOOK, CONDENSED FOR EASY, RAPID READING

"No Coffin for The Corpse"

BY CLAYTON RAWSON

- A spine-tingling mystery novel—one of the best of recent months. It involves an eccentric millionaire, the spirit world, and the most perplexing murder in police records solved by a master magician, The Great Merlini. Don't miss this thrilling, breathless tale, complete in next week's LIBERTY.
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Liberty

. . . FOR ALL

VOX POP

"The Voice of the People"

A GAY MARINE BOOT TAKES OFF

NEW RIVER, N. C.—From the looks of this place, it was a slip-up at the time of creation. The nearest town of any size is ninety-two miles away. Nature provided us with transportation, though—the mosquitoes are so large and well fed that we put saddles on them and take off. There is even room for a co-pilot aboard with us. I'd send this letter to you by my pet carrier mosquito, but I don't know your blood type. P-40 (that's his name) thrives on a strict diet of Type A blood. He discovered me one night by looking at my identification tag with the help of his friend Everready (a firefly). Everready flashed the light and P-40 looked at my dog tag to see if I had the correct blood type. I did—and we've been blood brothers ever since.

"Forty days and forty nights." (Was that Columbus roaming the Atlantic or the flood of Biblical times?) It has been raining here for five days without a let-up. I'm going to have my name changed to Noah and build an ark. I'll take two mosquitoes, two water moccasins, two dogs, two fleas, two top sergeants, two rattlesnakes, and two marines. Then we could land in another spot miles from nowhere, like Death Valley, and start all over again.

Seriously, though, this isn't a bad place. I'm at an advanced communication school and pretty well content. My only regret connected with the Marine Corps is that I didn't join up sooner.—*"Boot" Bob.*

CONVICTS IN THE WAR

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Love of one's country is a wonderful thing. It's more wonderful to find that men imprisoned behind bars are inspired to plead for their own liberation in order to fight in the service of their country to defeat the outside forces which would enslave and imprison all the people of a nation.

To the men of the prisons who have pleaded for their release to fight: I salute you for your fine patriotism, and I trust that the federal officials who read this will make it possible for you to fight in the service of the country we all love and respect.—*Frederick G. Frost.*

THAT "SENATOR" HANDLE

TALLAHASSEE, FLA.—Can You Top These? (November 21 Liberty) gave me many good laffs, and while I have no stories to stack up against those related, I would like to know how "Senator" Ford comes by his handle. Was he in Congress once?—*Jessie Baldwin.*

At a dinner of the Republican Club in New York City, when Mr. Ford followed the late President Harding, then senator from Ohio, he was introduced as Senator Ford, and the title stuck.—VOX POP EDITOR.

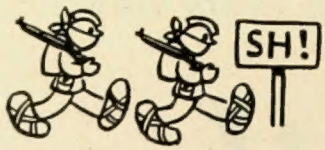
6,000-GALLON TARGETS

FALFURRIAS, TEX.—Specifications Are Uniform (November 14 Liberty) is a good story, but the author, William Rough, should study his refining more before he starts writing about it.

First, any pistol made that I have ever heard of could not puncture a tank made to hold propane. The steel in one of these tanks is from 5/8 to 1¼ inches thick, depending on the size of the tank. I once shot at a propane tank holding 6,000 gallons of it with a Springfield army rifle. Barely dented it from a distance of 100 yards.

Second, from my thirteen years' experience with dynamite and propane tanks, I believe it impossible to fasten enough dynamite by grease to the bottom of a propane tank to wreck it.—*Homer C. Givens.*

Homer, good friend, we don't like to ask embarrassing questions, but just between us coupla million Vox Poppers—what in tarnation induced you to start shooting at propane tanks?—VOX POP EDITOR.



WANTS NOISELESS ARMY

AUGUSTA, GA.—Soldiers keep on marching past my home day after day—most of them loud and boisterous. I suggest that each company commander impose a rule of strict silence on his men whenever they come within five hundred yards of a home, business district, or school.—*Deafened Dan.*

GREEN-TIGER KISS

BOISE, IDA.—Six months ago I met a marine who said he'd send me a picture of a green tiger if I kissed him. I did. He didn't. Friends have been trying to tell me that there is no such thing as a green tiger. Do you think he was kidding me?—*Bewildered.*

FICTIONARY IS SWELL

BANGOR, ME.—Your giggle department, Stoopnagle's Fictionary to you, is swell. It has become my favorite feature in Liberty, and I hope you are going to keep it going a long, long time. I am also anxious to see what words the readers will coin in the contest.—*Mason Downs.*

DOUBLE AD NAUSEAM

NEW YORK, N. Y.—The Purple Cow has been parodied *ad nauseam.* But when I read Princess Kropotkin's recipe for Cocktail Jelly in Liberty (December 12) also *ad nauseam*—I couldn't resist this one:

I never met a sidecar, jelled,
I hope I'll never meet one.
But should I some day be compelled,
I'd rather meet than eat one!
—*Belle Vivante.*

INSPIRING COVER

BAY SHORE, N. Y.—Liberty's 1941 Easter cover, from a painting by David Berger, showed a broken church and a crouching mother with her babe at the foot of a broken crucifix, with the Risen Lord bending over the pitiful humans.

This picture has been above my bed, bringing comfort to one who was in war-torn France and Flanders.

Can you not reproduce this picture once more?—*Jean Cabra Herbert.*

WHAT! COPY WHAT WE FIGHT AGAINST?

NEW YORK, N. Y.—When are we going to wake up and realize that our school systems are hopelessly outdated? For the duration of the war and for many years afterward we should teach our youngsters nothing but the highly useful science of killing and maiming an enemy with whatever equipment is at hand. A soldier doesn't have to know how to read or write, and if we train our youngsters in the art of war, beginning at the age of five, we'll have an unbeatable army.—*Richard Grumpf.*

JUST BETWEEN OURSELVES

ALL DRESSED UP

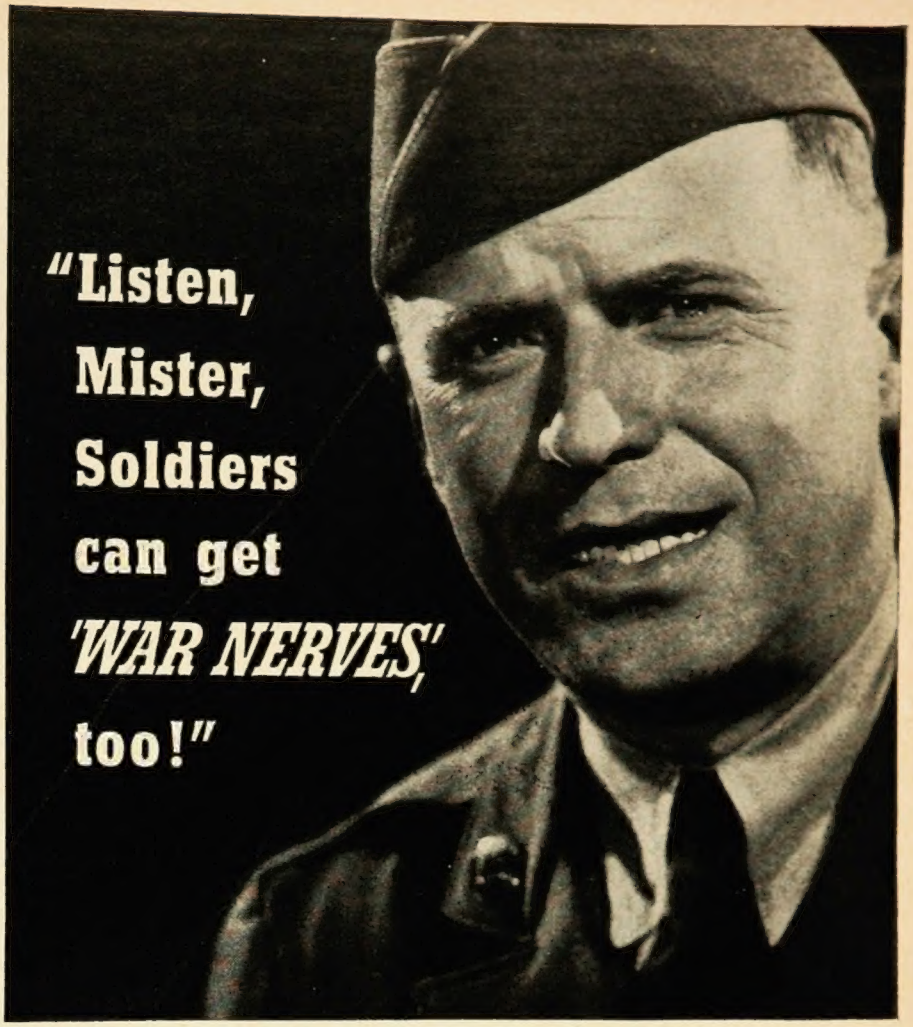
and going places! That's the way this issue makes us feel. This is the season for turning over new leaves—and from now on we're going to give you more and better leaves to turn over. That's our resolution for next year. It's really more of a revolution than a resolution, as we hope you've been noticing. Perhaps our bigger and better Liberty is prophetic of things to come in 1943. At any rate, it's in line with the government's policy of more beans in soup and more vitamins in bread. We think food for thought is important, too, and when reading matter becomes such a morale factor in wartime, it's our duty to put more punch in our pages if we can. It has taken quite a bit of doing in the past months to get ready for the change, and we won't pretend it hasn't. In fact we're not a bit modest about it—we'd like to shout about our accomplishment from the rooftops. But we're going to be so darned busy keeping up what we've started, we won't have time to blow our own horn. We'd be glad to lend it to you if you'd like to blow it. What say?

BEGINNING WITH

Direct Hits in this issue, Robert Ormond Case will hammer home fact and logic, with a grin or two, each week as his contribution to the war effort. Though essentially a novelist and newspaperman, he was elected chairman of the business committee of the Portland (Oregon) Board of Education, which trained in its school plant 41,000 of 62,000 workers engaged to build ships for the record-breaking Kaiser company.

Watch Case's smoke!

THE EDITORS



(A sergeant speaks his mind)

"I'm going to give it to you straight.

"We read a lot of stuff about how civilians are fighting 'war nerves.' Going to shows...dancing...reading... having fun to relax from all the grimness today and keeping up their morale.

"Sure, it's a good idea, but don't forget this. Soldiers and sailors can have 'war nerves,' too. I don't mean anything to do with courage and stuff like that. Believe me, they got plenty of nerve to take it—and dish it out—whatever the orders are.

"What I mean is that soldiers, maybe even more so, need shows and dancing and decent places to go when they're on leave. Boredom and monotony during their time off are as bad enemies as any goose-stepping German or Jap. We got to fight them, too.

"That's why everybody in this man's army gives thumbs up to this USO. They're doing a job, Mister. Fighting a fight.

"They're putting on swell shows... running club-houses...providing reading matter...taking care of troops in transit...following the flag wherever the army orders with their mobile units. They're spelling morale in our language with a capital M.

"So listen, all you folks. Next time you see a show or do a little rug-cutting or read a book or light a smoke or just sit down to play a game of gin-rummy or listen to the radio in your nice comfortable living room, just remember that there's lots of guys in O. D. and blue that can also use some of same.

"It all adds up to this...we like the job the USO is doing for us...and we hope you on the home front keep it rolling!"

The war chest against "war nerves" needs replenishing. Soon you'll be asked to help. Well, you heard what the sergeant said!

★ ★ ★

Send your contribution to your local USO Committee or to National Headquarters, USO, Empire State Building, New York City.

Give to the USO

Today's transports make speed. But tomorrow's giants will knock hours off their time and span half the world nonstop.

ON THE BEAM

BY THE PILOT

Meet the Mosquito

There's a new-type bomber buzzing over Europe these days that must have the Luftwaffe baffled. With two powerful liquid-cooled engines, it outpaces even the speedy Focke-Wulf, and it flies at such low altitudes that the Nazi pilots can't get in the usually advantageous position of "below and under."

This new offensive aerial weapon, called the Mosquito, is a British surprise package. Perhaps its most interesting feature is its very light all-wooden construction. It is the only all-wooden bomber in front-line use.

The British haven't said much about it—except that it's the fastest bomber in the world. On a raid over Oslo late in September, four Mosquito bombers surprised the Nazis in a big way, and far outdistanced the Nazi pursuits that went after them. When you see unusually good close-ups of factory ruins following British bomber raids, you can lay a bet that the photographer was in a Mosquito. It gets in and gets out—fast.

The Mosquito's wingspread is only fifty-four feet, and it is only forty feet long. There's a two-man crew.

As to armament, the British have been on the vague side so far. It "may" have four 20-mm. cannon and four .303 machine guns.

If you're keeping score on airplane models, mark the Mosquito down as the DH-98. It's a descendant of the famous De Havilland DH-4 of World War I. You'll be hearing much more about it.

Whirligig

All sorts of stories have been told on bald, benign Igor I. Sikorsky, one of the elder statesmen of American aviation, since he perfected his helicopter. A helicopter, you will recall, is a flying machine with a windmill-like thing on the top. It differs from the autogiro, which also has a windmill, in that *its* windmill provides both lift and propulsion.

Well, Igor was flying what he calls his "heli-co-peter" the other day when a factory lookout saw him disappear into a quarry. Alarms were rung. Men legged it for the quarry. Some one telephoned for a doctor. Just then the helicopter rose from the depths of the quarry, straight up, like a balloon.

Back at the airport, the builder of the world's first four-engine bombing plane (in World War I) explained with a trace of boyish sheepishness, "I've been wanting to do that for a long time."

Woolworth Gun

Airplanes have been used for a lot of funny purposes in this war even outside the comic strips, and now it looks more than a little possible that they will be used as gun smugglers.

Here's the story: The British have a very simple new machine gun, called the Sten gun, in mass production. It weighs a cat's whisker more than six pounds and can be easily dismantled and hidden in the clothing. It will deliver 550 shots a minute, including the time required to change its thirty-two-round magazine. Cheap to make, it sometimes is called the "Woolworth gun."

Why can't the United Nations drop such guns to millions of subject peoples when the time is ripe? Keep your eyes and ears open.

When the Big Fellows Come

Want to fly around the world in two days and nineteen hours? Or from New York to London in nine? Or halfway around the world without stopping? Today's war is making that possible for tomorrow's peacetime.

It was only four years ago that Howard Hughes established a record by circling the globe in a twin-engined Lockheed transport in ninety-one hours. That seemed plenty fast. But the warplane of today could follow Hughes' 14,824-mile route—New York to Paris, Moscow, Siberia, Fairbanks, and New York—in a full day's less time—sixty-seven hours.

One of the nation's leading aircraft designers is definitely planning on a nine-hour schedule from New York to London. And it's not one of those dreamy drafting-board ideas, either. The war is pushing almost all of those prewar "fantastic" ideas into hard reality today.

But increased speed isn't all. Tomorrow's giant transport planes will be able to span half the world nonstop. Some years ago an airplane actually flew 8,037 miles without coming down to earth, but that was an especially prepared stunt. Up until the war a 5,000-mile nonstop range was considered exceptionally high. But tomorrow's stock model transports—the big ones you can't know about in wartime—will have a range up to 10,000 miles with heavy loads. That means flying around the world along the Hughes route with only one stop—and doing it in not much more than forty-eight hours.

Odds and Ends

Wendell Willkie's round-the-world flight taught even some high government officials lessons in geography. Washington is finding out that Chungking is not west across the Pacific, but right over the North Pole. . . . If the Japs had the airplanes to bomb the Panama Canal nonstop from Tokyo, the shortest route would take their bombers over the Aleutians, Denver, and Brownsville, Texas. . . . One new aircraft plant is so large that visitors go sight-seeing in a motor scooter at twenty-five miles an hour. . . . The army air forces are fighting on ten separate fronts every hour of every day. If you can't name off all ten, here they are: Iceland, England, Egypt, Australia, New Caledonia, the Aleutians, China, New Guinea, the Solomons, and French Africa.

THE END

NEXT WEEK

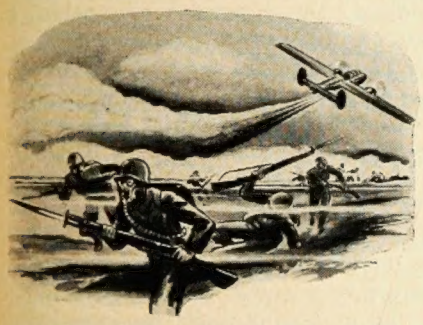
JANUARY 2, 1943

KICK THAT BLOC!

Of "pressure groups" in Washington, we all know at least that they represent more or less selfish special interests. We know something about the lobbyists who work on Congress for them, and about the regional blocs—strongest and stubbornest of all pressure groups—within Congress itself. What we don't know is how they work and how much can be done about them. Surely the man to tell us is RAYMOND CLAPPER, famous Washington observer. He will!

WHY HASN'T HITLER USED GAS?

Mussolini, besieged by the sanctions of fifty-two nations, nevertheless used mustard gas on the Ethiopians. Japan

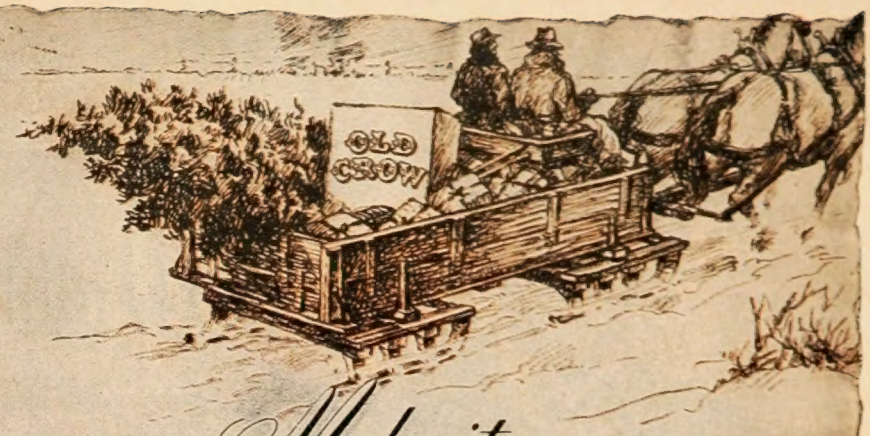


has used gas in China. And yet Hitler hasn't tried it anywhere. Why? The answer is given by OSCAR SCHISGALL in GAS WARFARE—THE U. S. IS READY. Read it and find out what is keeping Hitler "humane" in spite of his well known inclinations—about our own preparations to protect ourselves and to top the deadliest chemical warfare he could wage.

HOW ABOUT AMERICAN SPORTS IN THE YEAR 1962?

What will baseball amount to twenty years from now? What will this long grinding wartime of ours, with its privations and its Commando-Ranger rough stuff, have done to gentle sports like golf? To rugged ones like football? PAUL GALLICO, noted author and veteran sports reporter, has "dusted off the old crystal ball." Some of his prophecies *may* burn you up—but you'll certainly find them all mighty interesting.

ALSO: Some sparkling fiction, including—A LITTLE BIT OF GREEN, by FAITH BALDWIN, and THE PIRATES OF MASCARENHAS, by C. S. FORESTER; another GYP OF THE WEEK, the usual departments, cartoons, and features, and, of course, an evening's enjoyment—a condensation of the novel NO COFFIN FOR THE CORPSE, by CLAYTON RAWSON.



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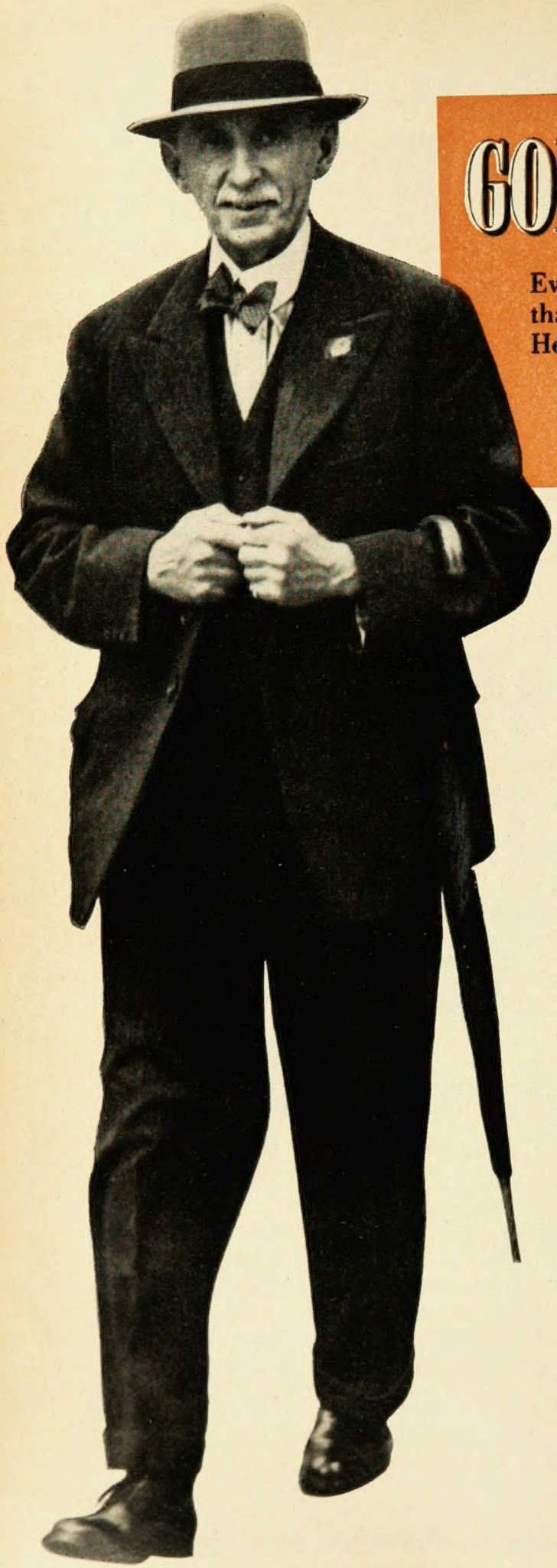


GOD and the GENERAL

Every great man has a personal philosophy that sees him through life's rough spots. Here are the beliefs of the hero of Malta

By DONALD WILHELM

A QUIET-MOVING giant suddenly loomed over me. Relaxed in a big deep chair behind a newspaper, I was waiting in the lounge of a modest old-style London hotel. I had expected to be interviewed by at least one uniformed aide before seeing William George Shedden Dobbie, Hero of Malta. He had just been decorated yet again by his King.

I looked up. The big man in tired street clothes looming over me said simply, "My name is Dobbie."

Did I get out of that chair! All in one motion I was on my feet, shaking hands and apologizing: "We American reporters, some of us, are pretty awful, general!"

He chuckled. Smiling all apologies aside, he suggested, "Shall we talk?"

He is a huge, quick, but heavy-going man with thick gray hair, reddish eyebrows run wild, and a short gray mustache. His 200 pounds must have been a saddleful for the horses he regularly rode before going to Malta.

"Yes," he said; "it's good to see London again, the Thames and the trees. There are no trees on Malta. And of course it's a joy to see my sons and grandson. But I was sorry to leave Malta, especially without saying good-by. We had to leave secretly, at night, while a raid was on."

To the remark that, at sixty-three, he certainly looked fit, after two years and more than 2,500 air raids on Malta, a bout with influenza, and two major operations, his response was: "The operations were a bit of a bother. I didn't mind the bombing. I wanted to see the matter through. I only wished that the enemy would attempt to land in force. We were ready for him."

"Will Malta fall?" I asked.

Surprised, a bit indignant, he said, "Certainly *not!* Gort will see to that!" Lord Gort is the Governor of Malta.

He did not rise, swing his arms, or make a speech after my deliberately provocative question. He certainly isn't a fire-eater or a table-thumper. Fact is, the most singular thing about him is the serenity of his deep-set gray-blue eyes.

Yet this is the man who, more than any other, saved Malta. Quite possibly Malta saved Cairo, and conceivably it saved the war.

In the grim days when Hitler was riding roughshod over Europe, some British politicians considered abandoning the little island outpost. It stood alone, a thousand miles from both Gibraltar and Alexandria and within twenty minutes of Axis flying fields on Sicily and in southern Italy. It had no fortified airdromes, no under-

ground shelters for planes. It had no AA guns then, and no planes at all except three old sea Gladiators in crates.

And no one could say how the 270,000 Maltese would react to war. They had no blood ties with Britain. For years Mussolini had kept hundreds of fifth columnists at work on Malta. Because they would need enormous supplies that would have to be got in despite bombing and torpedoing, the Maltese were viewed as a military liability in the event of a long siege.

In April, 1940, just before Mussolini decreed war, General Dobbie was called from retirement to take military and civil command of the island. First he served as acting governor, later as governor—the most popular one Malta ever had. He did his job. Among other things, he exiled a shipload of fifth columnists and established a central defense group to achieve complete co-operation by the heads of the army, navy, air, and civilian forces.

Malta stands! It will not fall!

After the most vicious, relentless, and prolonged battering in history, Malta's defenders have upset all sorts of ideas about the invincibility of aircraft and the inability of airdromes, even if adequately guarded by AA guns, to go on functioning. Month after month, its ground gunners and airmen have been destroying or badly damaging Axis planes at a rate approximating 1,500 a year. They have killed more Axis airmen than the total deaths caused by those airmen on the island. Malta diverted a thousand aircraft from the Battle of Britain; later, as many from the Russian front. Through many months it has kept approximately a thousand additional Axis planes on the job. Its own R. A. F. and Fleet Arm airmen have played havoc with the Italian fleet, ports, and plans. Its submarines have turned parts of the Mediterranean into enemy graveyards.

DOBBIE, of course, says he did little. He praised the people and the garrison, the Royal Navy, the Merchant Navy, the Malta gunners, airmen, the Maltese, the wives, daughters, sisters of men in all the services. But many authorities in London and in Washington, and every one on the island itself from Governor Gort down, all say that, far more than any other man, Dobbie did the trick. He did it by his engineering skill, by his understanding of aviation, by making the most of the skills of many others—in a word, by personality and leadership.

"He did something to me!" So said a young British officer as hard-bitten and disillusioned by war as a man could be.

Then he added:

"Old Dob is the simplest, humblest, gentlest of men. There never was a man with less vanity. I think that's one reason why, after two years with him, I've found it so difficult to describe him to others. There's nothing to get hold of, no oddities. He was never excited in his life. There is in him an inner calm hard to explain.

"There were plenty of tough moments on Malta. Two years of hellish bombing, going without comforts, often on half rations, gets you. I have seen old friends fly at one another for no reason at all. But not Dobbie.

"There are two fears that haunt a soldier about equally. One is the fear of his superiors. But you always knew just where Dobbie stood. He gave you a job to do. If you did it, nothing else mattered—who you were, socially or otherwise, whether you wore the old school tie, or whatever. The other fear is that of being killed or, worse, maimed. But Dobbie paid no more attention to bombs and machine-gun fire than to rain. He was in the tower of the palace roof when the Germans, trying to get the crippled Illustrious at the dockyard, concentrated more fire power on Valletta and Grand Harbor than has ever been released on any other spot on earth."

OTHER eyewitnesses agree that although goats, mules, and even the birds learned to take cover when the German airmen came, Dobbie stood his ground. Times without number he helped rescue people from their wrecked homes. One day he also rescued a Persian cat, Maurice. He took him home, cared for him, and made him such a devoted friend that Maurice followed him everywhere, even to roofs. Often, on the tennis court at his home four miles outside Valletta, Dobbie would insist on finishing a game or set after the siren sounded. At night, his daughter says, he'd often sit up waiting for the next raid. With Maurice purring on his lap, he would work at crossword puzzles or read mystery stories or improvise tunes at the piano. Daylight raids often found him in the shelters—ancient catacombs and other caves in the rock when he arrived in 1939. At his insistence many of these were equipped with electric lights, running water, and other comforts. Many have altars, at which he would often kneel with the people. By religious faith, he himself is one of the Plymouth Brethren.

Sir Walter Monckton, former Director General of the British Information Services at Cairo, said:

"One day Dobbie and I walked along streets so badly battered that every few hundred yards we had an Alpine climb. All the way were smiling faces and warm welcomes. To two Maltese women outside a small shop the governor spoke a few words of encouragement. 'We shall get the better of the enemy, all right,' he said. One of them replied that they prayed God for it and prayed for him every day. 'And He will answer your prayers,' the governor smiled. 'Oh,' the quiet answer came, 'God has been very good to us already.'"

As an old soldier, the general knew the hazards. But his way of looking at it was that if at any time it was God's will that he should die, that would be all right with him. To him this is a kind of (*Continued on page 30*)

General Sir William George Shedden Dobbie and (at right) Admiral Sir Dudley Pound.

HOW MUCH DO YOU OWE UNCLE?

A short and simple guide for the 1942 income taxpayer

BY MORRIS MARKEY

THE Congress of the United States has just passed the biggest tax bill in its history, and in the committee room Representative Wesley E. Disney of Oklahoma mopped his exhausted brow. "Well," he murmured, "if there is anything on earth that will make the people of this country tax-conscious, it is this bill."

It certainly is not difficult to agree with him. Almost exactly fifty million Americans will pay taxes *directly* to the federal government in 1943—more than two thirds of them for the first time in their lives. Two out of every five Americans, counting all the men and all the women and all the children, will chip directly into the gigantic pot. Only a few years ago just one out of every twenty Americans paid direct federal taxes.

During the next year we will be required to march up with a total of twenty-five billion dollars, nearly a quarter of all the money that all of us will earn. And this really huge burden of taxation has caused practically no astonishment, and no grumbling whatever!

Of course we shall pay it. The money is needed to buy food and weapons, clothing and ships for our sons and brothers who are fighting the enemy that would destroy us. All of us know that with this money we are helping to buy not only freedom but survival itself. By the same token, most of us are going to get a kick out of paying it up directly to the national Treasury—putting our own two-cents-worths into the war, as it were.

On the other hand, the processes of democracy work better and have more meaning when the people have a clear understanding of what is going on, how things work, what each individual is expected to do, particularly in an hour of peremptory need. And so it seems a good idea to look things over, not only to see what our new duties are but to see what our rights are—rights put into the tax law itself.

The federal government will tax us in three separate ways: First, the new Victory tax, a complete innovation. Second, the regular income tax. Third, excise taxes, of which the revenue stamps on whisky and cigarettes are examples.

Let's begin with the Victory tax, since it affects almost everybody who earns money at all. It begins operation very soon, on January 1, and it is something entirely new, being the first effort that our government has made to apply a "withholding tax"—deducting its share of our earnings before we get our pay envelopes or pay checks.

It is also our first experiment with enforced saving. The British have required all their people to do a certain amount of saving for themselves since early in the war. Their idea was threefold: to provide immediate revenues for the war effort; to prevent inflation caused by too much ready money in pockets; and to build up for each individual a cushion against the financial shocks of postwar reconstruction.

WE have gone at the same problem tentatively. It works this way: With certain exceptions, every person in the United States earning $12 a week or more will have 5 per cent of his total earnings deducted from his pay, beginning with January 1. The exceptions are domestic servants, farm employees (hired help), and men in the army or navy having the rank of private. The tax applies to married and single alike, regardless of children.

For the average wage earner, the procedure is simple. His boss will hold back the 5 per cent and periodically hand it over to the federal Treasury. But if a person pays alimony or separate maintenance allowances, he may deduct such amounts from his total wage before the 5-per-cent tax is applied. And there is no Victory tax on income received as compensation for injuries or sickness.

The business proprietor, who does not receive a fixed wage, naturally has other deductions. They are the ordinary expenses of conducting his enterprise—his overhead, including rent, interest on debts, local and state taxes, bad debts and depreciation, payments to pension trusts, and certain others.

Nobody is allowed to make deductions for gifts, whether to charities or to individuals, nor are husbands allowed to pay their wives a salary for keeping house.

The Victory tax will be collected regularly during 1943. At the end of that year the taxpayer will be entitled to a certain refund, which he will get in either of two ways: He will be given a non-interest-bearing government bond, payable one year after the close of the war; or he will be allowed to take his refund in the form of credit on his 1944 *regular* income-tax return, due on March 15 of that year.

A married man may claim refund by bond, or by credit on his income tax, for 40 per cent of the total amount of Victory tax he has paid, plus 2 per cent more for each dependent. But the maximum amount he can claim is $1,000.

A single man may claim credit for 25 per cent of the Victory tax, up to a maximum of $500.

But to earn these credits, the individual must prove that an amount of money equal to the refund he claims has been invested during the year either in War Bonds or in some form of insurance.

Soldiers and sailors *above* the rank of private are subject to the Victory tax. But they will not have it deducted from their pay. They will be required to pay it later.

THE person earning $20 a week will pay $52 in Victory tax alone in 1943. The person earning $50 a week will pay $130. He who earns $100 a week will pay $260. All deducted before wages are paid by the employer.

The original Social Security laws established that with the beginning of 1943 the deductions would be increased from 1 per cent of pay to 2 per cent—the amount to be matched, of course, with an equal payment by the employer. But this increase is not needed now, so the rate has been frozen at 1 per cent—which reduces, in effect, the amount which the new tax will take from the envelope.

The income tax is the regular annual tax with which some millions of us are already familiar—and which many more millions must now become acquainted with. It will not be deducted from your earnings. It is, in fact, a tax upon your *last year's* income. Next March 15 you will be taxed for the money you earned during 1942.

The regular income tax is something you will have to figure out for yourself. Simple printed forms will be provided by the Treasury Department. First of all, you have to know exactly how much money you made in 1942. After that it is really rather simple, as the forms tell you precisely how to calculate.

Here are the *minimum* requirements of the regular income tax:

1. If you are single and earned as much as $11.70 a week for fifty-two weeks in 1942—regardless of

(*Continued on page 71*)

THIS IS INFLATION

LIKE the weather, everybody talks about inflation but few people do anything about it. Everybody should do something about it—and can. One of the things they can do is to understand it. As a duty of his citizenship, every responsible American must know how it works, how it can affect *his* life. One of the great problems of our times, inflation can wreck a nation's financial structure, cause its economy to stop dead in its tracks. Here, in the first of a series of Liberty visualizations, inflation is stripped to its economic skeleton.

Despite much past topheaviness on the subject, inflation is not hard to understand. It is simply a tremendous rise in prices accompanied by a scarcity of civilian goods. Money is more plentiful, goods less so. Aided by increased purchasing power, competitive bidding to obtain the few goods left forces the prices of commodities *up*. Result: money loses its value, and economic rigor mortis sets in. For example:

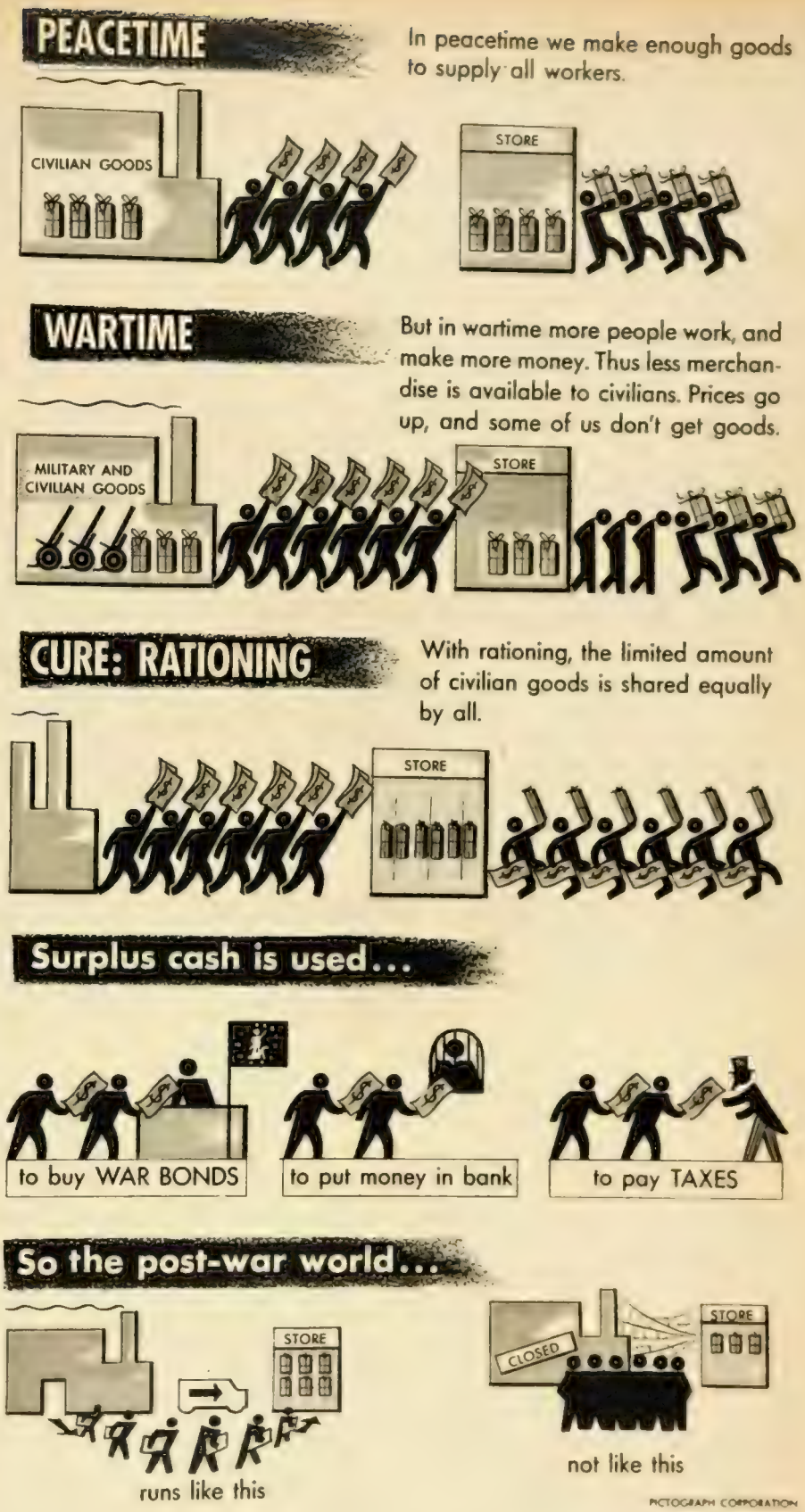
1. In peacetime, factories produce enough goods to supply workers' needs. After finishing their stint in factories, workers can go to stores and obtain all the commodities required. No shortages exist.

2. In wartime, however, the bulk of production is converted to military use. A shortage of civilian goods results. With extra pay, workers bid higher for goods, forcing prices up. Some get some goods, some don't.

3. By rationing goods equally, the small available supply of goods is shared alike by every one. Prices are fixed, and small-income groups can obtain goods as well as the rich.

4. The unspent money must be kept out of circulation to prevent prices from going up. To do this, it is placed in War Bonds, in savings accounts, and is used to pay taxes to defray cost of the war.

5. In this manner the economic structure remains steady and the price scale unimpaired. Money still has value. Credit, in the form of savings and War Bonds, still exists. While our factories are converting from war work to peace production, there is credit to tide workers over the gap. Factories continue healthy operation, don't fall into disuse from postwar slump. Men have jobs—and pay


PEACETIME
In peacetime we make enough goods to supply all workers.
CIVILIAN GOODS
STORE
WARTIME
But in wartime more people work, and make more money. Thus less merchandise is available to civilians. Prices go up, and some of us don't get goods.
MILITARY AND CIVILIAN GOODS
STORE
CURE: RATIONING
With rationing, the limited amount of civilian goods is shared equally by all.
STORE
Surplus cash is used...
to buy WAR BONDS
to put money in bank
to pay TAXES
So the post-war world...
STORE
runs like this
CLOSED
STORE
not like this
PICTOGRAPH CORPORATION

A cat can look at a king—but not many can capture an imperial Jap submarine

RED SADIE AN

NONE of us on board the Tobango could know that Red Sadie was fatefully waiting to keep a rendezvous with our ship. When the rusty old tramp snored down the Gulf to swing around Cape San Antonio, all that any one knew for certain was what would follow inexorably if an enemy war head blasted her hull. For the cargo we toted was ammunition.

But not till we sailed and a smart destroyer danced out to escort us to Limon Bay did I have an inkling of what we carried. I was new to the ship, having come aboard in a pierhead jump to take the berth of a junior mate who was left ashore with a broken leg.

My chief disturbance just then was the skipper, a sharp little man with quick gray eyes which chronically spoke disapproval. Willets, his name. He'd leaped down my throat the moment he saw me, and those first hours out what I wanted most was to take a poke at him.

It surprised me, then, to have the Old Man get actually affable toward me next day. Pointing across at the escort vessel, which was loafing along just off our quarter, he announced: "That's where I'd be, Mr. Pladek, if I had my rights."

"How's that, sir?" I asked.

"I'm lieutenant commander in the Reserve. But they won't call me to active duty. More valuable here—that's what they say. That's what they *say*," he repeated darkly.

In that moment I guessed what troubled Willets. A thwarted ego was gnawing the man. So poutered up with his own importance, he wasted half his mental energy trying to make a big impression.

"They scared you might steal the show?" I said, tongue in cheek.

"That's close enough. Suits some one's purpose up in Washington to *say* that I'm more important here."

That afternoon started the sneaking fondness I've felt ever since for the little captain. You can't know a fellow's personal devil and not make allowances, understanding. If a lunatic tells you he's Bonaparte, there's not any fun in retorting, "Oh, no," and if Willets was pleased to envision himself as the twentieth-century John Paul Jones, why should I hold his dream against him? After all, he was crowding fifty. He was stuck on the bridge of a workaday tramp, while the seas were alive with men-o'-war gallantly going forth to battle.

But there was a measure of solace for him when, passing the breakwater off Cristobal, he was given priority through the Canal. Even a transport thrashing up channel was ordered to stand aside for our ship; and as soon as we'd stepped down Miraflores, reaching Pacific level at

Our searchlight flooded the conning tower. Almost at once our gun exploded, orange flame bursting out of its mouth as if a sea serpent had suddenly belched.

THE RISING SUN

BY PAUL DERESCO AUGSBURG

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GODWIN

last, the tugs waited, ready to warp us in near the coaling plant under Sosa Hill.

Presto! The plank was hardly in place before the Tobango swarmed with workmen. All that night the riveting hammers beat their tattoo on the drums of my ears. In the end, a gun had been mounted aft and a navy detail took quarters on board to serve it with shells if we were attacked.

But meanwhile marines kept guarding the pier, with orders that none except Captain Willets should be permitted to leave the ship.

Luke Gilpin, a lank and hairy bos'n with more years at sea than I'd been in this world, turned from morosely regarding the hills as I sauntered toward him along the deck.

"Don't like it, mister," he growled at me, "not leaving us go ashore. I got a lady friend like to see me."

Overhead the army pursuits were buzzing, while a cruiser was standing down the slot from the final lock at Miraflores. You could feel the tempo of war around you, and I made mention of that to Luke as cause of his lady's disappointment.

"Exactly, mister." Then he nodded aft, where a navy commander was inspecting the gun. "They're sending us out to sea on our own, and we'll likely get sunk and never come back. Which is just why they oughta left me go and pay my last respects to Lulu. The cap'n can go, and so he does; and the first pretty spy who sits on his lap can find out all as he ever knew."

It was then that Red Sadie boarded our tramp; and just by the way she crossed the plank, the assurance of her, her confident tread, you knew she was wise in her knowledge of ships. She passed the marine with no more than a glance, taking for granted her privileged status, then stalked rather wearily up to the deck, and paused a moment to get her bearings before setting out with unerring aim for the spot where the galley door would be found.

She was a redhead, a water-front hussy steeped in awareness of every evil. The sign of her sin was heavy on her, and yet she could carry herself with an air which seemed to shrug and to say, "So what?"

Then the bos'n pounced.

"Sadie!" he hollered, and caught her up. There was a collar around her neck. "Dang my eyes, it's Sadie!" he cried. "See this tag? Joe Merkle made it. 'Red Sadie, S.S. Southern Star.' She's in my boat— Oh, Sadie, warn't you?—when we have to abandon the poor old tub in a blue-hell blow off Punta Este."

Sadie knew sailors. She was purring contentedly now in his arms while I peered at that crudely

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CHRISTMAS PRESENT

"Tell us about Santa Claus," the children said. But Joyce knew more about 21 and the Stork Club

BY ALEC RACKOWE

ILLUSTRATED BY O. F. SCHMIDT

JOYCE ALINGTON met him in a small nameless town in mid-Ohio the day before Christmas Eve. It was bitterly cold, with a thin gray sky that had followed the smart convertible all the way from Chicago.

She stopped for lunch, wrapping her beaver coat more tightly about her slim figure as she scurried into the café. When she had caught her breath she looked around the clean empty place and saw him sitting at the counter.

He had a cup of coffee before him. The chevrons on the sleeve of his tunic marked him a technical sergeant. He was tall, brown-haired, brown-eyed. His greatcoat lay over the stool next to him, and on the floor was a zippered carry-all.

Joyce sat down a few stools away. She threw open her coat, unbuttoned her tweed jacket, and brushed her jet bob from her cheek as she looked at the menu. The neat waitress took her order for salad, tea, and toast, and Joyce turned her head with the assurance that had made her a byword from the Stork Club to El Morocco and stared with wide gray eyes at the sergeant.

He was looking at her. There was the faintest pucker between his brows, and Joyce smiled inwardly. She was used to that look. People mightn't place her immediately, but the rotogravures had made her face almost as familiar as the columns had made her name. Joyce Alington, heiress and Number One post-debutante.

The sergeant met her eyes, then looked away. Joyce opened her vanity, inspected her ivory-skinned face; sighed as she closed the gold trinket. The wreaths and fragrant pine branches were reminding her too strongly of the closeness of Christmas and she had a sinking feeling of disappointment at her stomach.

She'd been looking forward so to spending the holidays with her father in Chicago and Detroit. But dad was no longer merely chairman of the board of Alington Motors. He was Major General James G. Alington and he had been practically snatched from her at the table in the Blackstone. An aide had come up, murmured. Dad had spoken to Joyce. "I'm flying to the Coast in an hour. Orders. I'll get you a seat in a New York plane. I think I can swing it."

"I'll drive, darling. If I'm to be in New York I'll want the car." Joyce had twisted her lips, trying to smile, because she couldn't let dad see how disappointed she was.

For years, ever since the divorce, she had looked forward to Christmas because it was the time she saw dad. Christmas *was* dad. It was presents for the servants and mother and Sue; it was fuss and furor and crowded shops—but it was also the time she saw her big, busy, harassed but incredibly understanding father.

He was looking at her from tired heavy eyes. "I haven't had time to get your Christmas present. You get something for yourself and have them send the bill to the Detroit office."

Joyce said, "Oh, golly," and lifted her shoulders in the dark green jacket with the jeweled-and-enamel pin on the lapel. Disappointment was moiling in her. She felt like crying. Instead she smiled and said lightly, "I can't think of a thing I want. People like us have everything. The best present I could get would be no more Christmases."

She reached across the table and pressed his hand against the tightness that was at her throat. "Don't look at me like that, darling. I'm all right."

Dad said, "If you think of anything, get it."

"Anything?"

"Anything. Be careful, driving. Wire the office here when you get home. They'll forward it. And have a good Christmas, dear."

"Oh, Christmas . . ." Joyce said and lifted her shoulders.

SHE still felt like that. Felt more strongly so as New York got nearer. "Christmas . . ." Joyce thought and looked at her salad.

Mother would be busy with some sort of war affair. Sue would be off on her own projects. Other years it had been no different. But there'd always been dad for Joyce. Sue was five years older, with a life of her own. Joyce had turned to her father and not been disappointed. But this Christmas . . . There'd be lots of messages waiting for her. The lads who could wangle it were in town on leave. The mob would be gathering at the Cub Room. But somehow it gave her no feeling of pleasure—of anticipation.

And if she was home—the presents. . . . She frowned. Sue wouldn't like the nightgown, and finding French nightgowns was like locating the proverbial hayed-up needle. Mother had a dozen other bed jackets. She never wore one of them.

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Joyce caught hold of Steve's belt; felt him move forward.

Joyce smiled. "Look, sergeant," she said. "Do you *have* to go to Pittsburgh?"

ILLUSTRATED BY E. FRANKLIN WITTMACK

VIA U. S. SUB TO JAPAN—AND BACK!

BY A NAVY SUBMARINE SKIPPER

as told to Stanton Delaplane

THIS submarine, the Eel, was not far from Pearl Harbor when the Japs struck. Two days later she was on her way to their coastal waters, and there—as her skipper told in Liberty last week—she torpedoed and sank five Jap merchantmen. As the fifth went down a Jap destroyer came out of the fog. The Eel submerged just in time. The destroyer's first depth charge nearly split her crew's eardrums.

THE Jap destroyer lets go her Y-gun and a pair of ash cans splash through the sea to port.

Crack! Crack!

Just over, thank God! The Eel rolls in the whip of the concussion. We hang onto whatever we can grab to keep from being thrown to the deck.

Jar! *Crack!* Jar! *Crack!*

There's another pair. The Jap is circling, stinging in a methodical pattern. I feel as a rat must feel when the cat has him cornered.

Bam! Bam!

A shattering jar as the concussion rolls us. An ear-splitting crack as the ash cans burst. Enough TNT there to split our steel seams if he gets within range.

Bam! Swish! That eerie swish of water through the superstructure means that last one was close. Too close! I look at my watch, glowing green beneath the crystal. Ten minutes. Hell, it seems like an hour. I'm enough of a navy man to know we've got a half hour or more coming. The Jap is not going to give us up easily. He knows we're down here and he's sniffing with his sound gear.

Wish I had a torpedo tube stuffed with oil and debris. I'd let it go. Maybe he'd think he got us.

In the hushed interior of the Eel we talk in whispers. We have kicked off our shoes and we walk silently in our socks. The diving officer stands tight-lipped at the controls. All noisy machinery is shut down. We don't dare use our motors to get away.

This is what it feels like to be trapped. We who were the hunters are now the hunted—waiting for the explosion that will burst our steel sides and send us to the muddy bottom of the sea.

Jar! *Bam! Swish!*

Lord, what I'd give for a chance to fight it out—gun to gun!

But submarine men are not trained that way. Every officer and man on this ship knows his job. I know mine. We sit there in the Eel, floating

All around us are the measureless waters. Every turn of the screws drives us a few feet nearer home.

quietly, minding the jobs for which the navy trained us.

Jar! *Bam! Swish!*

You're warm, Mr. Jap. But not warm enough. Go ahead and pattern, damn you. It's a big ocean.

I look around to see how the crew is taking it. It's their first time under fire, just as it is mine.

The boy on the telephone watch in the motor room is sitting on his haunches. His receivers are on his head and his jaws are biting rhythmically through 100-per-cent American gum. Excited? You bet he is. He's deep in a Western story thriller. His eyes are wide open as he flips the page. I don't think he even hears the depth charges!

The other men are intent on their jobs. I notice they jerk involuntarily when the cans go off. So do I.

Crack! Crack!

The colored mess boy passes me. He says in a stage whisper:

"Cap'n, suh, we sure givin' that Jap hell, ain't we?"

It gives me a crazy longing to laugh, to lie down on the deck and howl. Tension relief, I suppose.

The Jap's screws are racing off away from us now. The cans are coming down slower. He's being careful. Up there in the fresh daylight the Jap gunners are standing eagerly by their guns, waiting for us to be blown to the surface, waiting to blow us to hell. Probably a couple of planes circling overhead by now. All loaded with high explosive, looking for our black shadow. They'll never get us that way, though. We're too deep for that.

The Jap's screws are fading, and then they halt abruptly. I know he's waiting for us to get panicky and break. But none of that for us.

The screws start up again. They're easy to hear underwater through the hull. The Jap gets up attack speed, speed sufficient to drop his depth charges and get away without blowing his own stern off.

Crack! Crack!

He drops a couple at random and rushes away. He's really gone this time. Either he thinks he got us or he thinks we got away. On the telephone come quiet voices from crewmen telling me that everything is secure. We've survived forty-five minutes of hell. The Jap threw fifteen charges at us and missed. We'll get away after all.

I can feel an inner collapsing. Others must feel the same way, for I see them sitting down. But nobody says a word. At midnight we get under way, pointing east and home.

NOW we are on the middle leg of the voyage home. I never realized before how much lonely ocean covers this world. All around us are the measureless waters of the Pacific.

The Eel beats sweetly on under her excellent American-made motors. Every turn of the screws drives us a few feet nearer home. Home!

We have had good hunting. Four Jap flags are painted on our bulkhead. We have survived much. But we are not yet free. We still have to keep the same straining lookout for prowling Jap task forces, for seaplanes from wandering cruisers, for home-bound Jap submarines.

My gunnery officer and the cook are down with pneumonia. We don't carry a doctor, but the chief pharmacist's mate is doing what he can for them. What they need is to soak up sunshine again. Our daily dose of vitamin pills is not enough. Neither is the ship's sun lamp.

(Continued on page 28)

Earl Mueller

LIKE MISTLETOE

A man disappointed in love may be caught on the rebound . . . but will he rebound twice?

BY PHYLLIS DUGANNE

ILLUSTRATED BY CARL MUELLER

LANE ARCHER called gaily, "Alex! How nice to see you!" and threaded a way through her chattering guests to the door.

She was wearing a scarlet cocktail jacket embroidered in gold, and a voluminous romantic skirt of black velvet. Two hours before, seated across a table in Tony's, she had looked businesslike and smart in a gray tailored suit and flat-brimmed Spanish hat with a dotted veil.

Pete Winkler, Lane's husband, appeared behind her. "Hello there, Alex! I was beginning to think you didn't like us any more." Alex shook Pete's outstretched hand and met his friendly hazel eyes uncomfortably. "What have you been doing with yourself?"

"Nothing much." Alex wondered what Pete would do if he told him the truth. Having lunch with Lane almost every day, meeting her daily for brief unsatisfactory half-hours at Tony's or Frank's. . . .

Lane tucked her arm through Alex's. "I want you to meet Pete's little cousin, Hetty Lancaster. This party is really for her." Her dark eyes were amused. "And don't look so utterly wretched, my darling," she added, under her breath, as she led him away across the room.

He did not answer. He hated being here; he felt like the lowest possible form of dog. If he had not hated it because of Pete Winkler, he would still have hated it because being with Lane in a roomful of people was torture. He wanted to take her in his arms.

"Hetty," Lane was saying, "this is Alex Smith, our oldest and dearest friend in New York."

Oh, no, Lane! he protested inwardly while his lips formed a smile and his eyes looked down into eyes the color of blue larkspur.

Hetty Lancaster's smile was spontaneous with a childish combination of shyness and friendliness. Lane moved away, and Hetty murmured, "It always amazes me that in a city as big as New York, you so often see people and then in a few hours find yourself being introduced to them. I saw you this afternoon with Lane."

"Really?" he said, forcing the word past a sudden constriction in his throat. He did not dare look at her closely, did not dare to wonder whether there was significance in her statement. If she had seen them together on the street, it did not matter. But if she had seen them in Tony's . . . He had been bitter, this afternoon, telling Lane that she must make a choice, that he could not continue like this.

"Lane's amazing, isn't she?" Hetty asked, her blue eyes following their hostess. "To be able to hold an important job and run a house and still look so beautiful and carefree—"

"Let's sit down," Alex suggested. He must warn Lane, he was thinking. His bitterness of the afternoon welled into active anger. Lies and deceptions were hateful to him. He wanted now, this instant, to stride across the crowded room to where Pete Winkler stood and say loudly, so that every one should hear, "See here, Pete. I love Lane and she loves me. What are we going to do about it?"

Freddy Hill, who was Lane's assistant in the advertising department at Marvin-Wolfson's, stopped before them, his bright malicious eyes on Hetty's face. "Stranger in New York!" he said. "I don't know you."

"Hetty Lancaster," she answered. "I'm Pete's cousin."

"Very commendable. And what else do you do?"

"I'm a freak," Hetty said gravely. "I'm the skeleton in the closet. I don't do anything."

Freddy blinked. "That's very interesting," he told her. "Provocative. I want to hear more about it. How do you do nothing?"

"It takes practice," she admitted.

"Practice! It takes money," he contradicted.

She nodded. "I'm a parasite," she explained.

"How sweet!" said Freddy.

Ass, thought Alex, his eyes moving across the room to Lane.

Freddy's voice rose, isolated from the general babble. "She's a parasite! Isn't that fascinating? Like—like mistletoe." He chuckled maliciously. "And not an oak in the room!"

Other people seemed to find that amusing. Laughter rose behind Alex, and Pete Winkler said, a little overloud, "You're right, Freddy! Not an oak!" and began to laugh, too. Alex did not think it was funny. He stood, frowning, wishing he had not come.

"Is that a real balcony?" Hetty Lancaster asked him, and moved decisively toward the French doors and opened them. Alex followed her outside and closed the doors behind them. The March air was crisp, its freshness welcome after the smoke-filled room, and they stood on the narrow iron balcony breathing deeply. Below, in Gramercy Park, tulips made shadowy patterns in the dusk and branches of trees were knobbed with swelling leaf buds. Behind the closed doors the cocktail party sounded like the bird and monkey house in the zoo. Divorced from faces and gestures, fifty-odd human voices raised in competition became shrill and ugly.

"I HATE parties like this," Alex said violently.

"I think most men do," she answered. "My father wouldn't come."

He did not want to talk, but he made an effort. "Where do you live in the country?" he inquired.

Her voice was low and pleasant; she talked easily, yet without chattering. They lived in western Massachusetts, she told him. Her father, who was a biologist, had come to New York to do some research, and she had come with him to keep house and be company for him.

Alex Smith smiled. It sounded quaint and Victorian, as she said it. Dutiful daughters were a rarity in his world. He wondered if she played the piano and sang little songs for her parent in the evenings. Perhaps

(Continued on page 66)

er Lane had gone, Alex pulled Hetty
his lap and held her close. She sat
curled like a kitten against him.

Christmas Dinner Menu
(All Army Mess Halls, 1942)
CELERY OLIVES MIXED PICKLES RADISH ROSES
FRESH FRUIT CUP
CREAM OF CELERY SOUP
ROAST YOUNG TURKEY WITH DRESSING
GIBLET GRAVY CRANBERRY SAUCE
SNOWFLAKE POTATOES GREEN BEANS
TOMATOES CORN PUDDING
HEARTS OF LETTUCE WITH RUSSIAN DRESSING
HOT ROLLS AND BUTTER
MINCE OR PUMPKIN PIE
ICE CREAM AND CAKE OR FRUITS
NUTS MINTS CANDY
COFFEE

CHRISTMAS IN THE ARMY

Uncle Sam is going to make it a merry one for the boys in uniform. Here's how

BY GRETTA PALMER

YOUR son in uniform may spend Christmas away from home—halfway around the world from home, perhaps. Does that mean that his Christmas dinner menu will be canned bully beef? It does not!

Of course, if his unit happens to be in action on December 25, getting that crack at the Axis he has been rarin' to get, he may find himself too busy to sit down for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. But if he is doing something from which he can possibly take the time, you can be sure he won't go Christmas-dinnerless.

The army may talk tough but it has a soft heart when it comes to real sentiment. The army is going to give your boy a Christmas party.

Plans have been worked out in a dozen bustling government offices to see that Santa Claus receives top priority rating in reaching the young men overseas. Memos in triplicate have such merry headings as, "In re: holly wreaths for Iceland," and "Estimate of cranberry sauce requirements of the Xth Air Force." In the headquarters of USO, which operates recreation centers close to all the camps, blueprints for a merry Christmas have been drawn for all mainland camps and overseas bases. The USO plans are based on a sound holiday principle—that the preparations for Christmas are fun and that USO workers mustn't keep all this fun to themselves.

Some USO clubhouses have tacked up notices on their bulletin boards, offering the services of girl volunteers to help the men with their Christmas shopping.

Every clubhouse has been provided with special stationery bearing a gay Christmas message, on which the soldiers and sailors can write their holiday greetings. Men who know that they will be sent abroad before the holidays can write their greetings and leave them at the USO club with instructions for mailing them to arrive on Christmas Eve.

Every clubhouse has a counter for free gift wrapping where the men can bring their presents and watch the hostesses fold them into bright paper, with stickers and tags. Last year the Pensacola USO club alone used a mile of Christmas paper and 1,700 seals and tags! The things brought in for wrapping are as varied as the servicemen themselves.

Last year one navy chief, just back from a Bermuda trip, brought in thirty-five bottles of perfume which he had bought on the island—and he had them wrapped to send to thirty-five different girls!

While the shopping and wrapping go on in American camps, the trimmings for an old-fashioned Christmas are already on the seas, well on their way to soldiers and sailors at distant posts. The army itself is playing Santa Claus to the overseas boys. Though the shipping shortage is so critical that some distant USO clubhouses will not be allowed trees, every army post, it is hoped, will get

At an A. E. F. camp in Ireland the Christmas mail from home arrives.

There's a Christmas box for every man at Fort McClellan in Florida.

At Camp Blanding one buddy eats a cookie, the other reads a letter.

Afraid your son will go Christmas-dinnerless? How do you know movie star Jean Rogers won't be there to serve him with drumsticks or white meat, like this?

a big tree with the greetings of the War Department.

Last year thousands of trees were sent to Iceland, complete with stars and colored balls—and they were very welcome, for the forests of the whole country are three stunted apple trees. The army authorities even sent a shipload of trees to Newfoundland, whose scenery is largely made up of evergreens. Trees were really needed for the tropical camps in the Caribbean, and they were sent there. This year the army hopes to deliver trees all over the world.

In the holds of the ships there will be iceboxes filled solid. Hundreds of thousands of cans of cranberry jelly. Thousands of turkeys. That bird, roasted, will be eaten this year in countries where no one ever saw him before; and mince and pumpkin pies will be introduced to countries to which they are strangers. For the American Christmas follows the American flag.

There will be a real Christmas Eve celebration at all the USO clubhouses. In the tropics, firecrackers and noisemakers will be used instead of snowballs. Each camp will plan its own pageant.

In one camp last year, at the last moment several men arrived from northern stations with beards, grown to protect their faces from the cold; they were pressed into service in the Christmas pageant as the Wise Men.

In some of the naval flying stations Santa Claus will come swooping out of the sky in a patrol bomber. He will be greeted by uniformed men lined up at salute who will pipe him aboard the station, to be greeted by the commander. In many army camps Santa Claus will arrive in a jeep, to the rolling of drums and a Presidential salute while the band plays Christmas tunes. At some air stations Santa will open his pack and distribute gifts in a hangar trimmed with greens and lights.

THE army does not solicit Christmas presents from the general public. But in many towns the people are contributing money to see that every serviceman near by receives at least one. Last year at one Christmas celebration two young men dissolved into tears when Santa handed them their gifts. They were orphans who hadn't received a Christmas present from any one for years.

In some camps the men themselves will play Santa to the local children. Soldier volunteers will collect poor children by bus for a real turkey dinner, a tree packed with toys, and a showing of movies.

When the boys have had their celebration in the camp itself, their fun is still not over. All USO clubhouses will hold open house on Christmas Day, with a free buffet of cold turkey, roast beef, fruits, nuts, cigars, cigarettes, and candies.

A midnight Mass will be held for Catholics in all the camps, and Christmas Day services for Protestants. Since Christmas is not a Jewish holiday, a great many men of this race are volunteering to pass up their leaves at this time so that the Christian boys may visit their homes. Some have even offered to spend Christmas Day doing kitchen police so that the others may celebrate.

The singing of carols is one religious ritual in which Catholics and Protestants can join. In permanent military reservations the soldier-singers will go to every officer's home and serenade the family. Wherever there are sentries on lonely duty, groups of carolers will travel to their posts, to give them O Little Town of Bethlehem and It Came Upon the Midnight Clear. Even men in the guardhouse will be serenaded.

And now a word about how *you* can help: If you want to invite two or more boys to share Christmas in your home, call the nearest USO and tell them about it. Ask whether there is a need of volunteers to bake plum puddings and Christmas cookies, and whether your town is gathering a fund to see that every man gets something in the toe of his stocking. Almost surely there will be something you can do.

And if your own boy is too far away to spend his Christmas at home, don't think of him as being lonely or forlorn. Christmas in the army will be one of the great experiences of his life.

THE END

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

TO Julian Day, recently come to Virginia from England in 1774, it was unthinkable that he should take up arms against his King. So, when he found in Williamsburg a strong sympathy for Massachusetts and a conviction that, should war come, Virginia would stand with her sister colony against the redcoats, he determined to go back to England as soon as he could save his passage money out of what he earned teaching a boys' school.

It was a girl who made him change his mind. Not Dorothea, sister of his friend St. John Sprague; not the beautiful Regina Greensleeves, with whom he had fallen in love at first sight, even though he knew St. John intended to marry her; but Tibby Mawes, the daughter of a laundress, and twin sister of Kit, who went to Julian's school.

Tibby was a vivid elflike creature whose insatiable thirst for learning had so roused Julian's interest that he tutored her and arranged to send her to Mrs. Hallam's school for girls. He felt proud of her progress, almost paternal, although he was only twenty-two.

As for Tibby, she adored Julian and it was her grief when she discovered that he planned to leave Virginia that persuaded him to stay.

"Nobody cried when I left England," he told her, when she asked him why he had changed his mind. And that explanation had to satisfy himself as well as Tibby.

In the meantime, the Battle of Bunker Hill had been fought and feeling ran high in Virginia. Julian, who was staying at St. John Sprague's house, suggested that his friend might be embarrassed at having a Tory under his roof and offered to leave. But, "Damn it, man," said St. John, "I happen to like you, whatever your politics are!" And that seemed to settle it.

As time went on, St. John was away more and more attending to his law business, and Regina turned her full attention to Julian. She liked having a handsome young man to flirt with—especially one loyal to the King, for she was a strong Tory. She led him on unmercifully, until Julian was scarcely able to resist sweeping her into his arms, St. John or no St. John.

DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

ST. JOHN'S Richmond client had possessions in Norfolk on which he desired a reliable report, and so, with a sigh, St. John set off on a ride southward which would keep him from home over Christmas. It also brought him to Norfolk in time for the New Year's Day bombardment, when Dunmore set fire to the town by shells from the harbor—a three days' conflagration which left four fifths of the city in ashes and many of its wealthiest inhabitants without shelter in midwinter.

St. John saved his horse but nothing else, and arrived home late in January in a quiet rage. He had now seen war at first hand, and it seemed to him both hideous and infuriating. He began to talk darkly of offering himself as a gentleman volunteer or a cadet, serving without pay on the chance of a commission—a prospect which left Dorothea white-faced and silent and reduced Aunt Anabel to tears.

Washington was established in a convenient house near Harvard, Edmund Randolph wrote St. John, and the militia (now known as "the troops of the United Provinces of North America") were encamped in the town and in the university buildings and *à la belle étoile*, so that Cambridge had rather the look of a county fair. A new flag had been raised at headquarters—a rattlesnake with thirteen rattles, and the arm and hand of a man holding thirteen arrows.

The British at Boston cannonaded the Cambridge camp almost every day, with trifling result. Riflemen and gentlemen volunteers were coming in from Virginia and Pennsylvania via Reading, where they were issued knapsacks, blankets, and ammunition. A man who brought along his own horse or gun was a minor hero.

In March the Raleigh buzzed with excitement and everybody stood everybody drinks because Washing-

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK BENSING

His voice dropped low into her ear. "You must choose between me and the King."

ance and war in a vivid novel of America's past

BY ELSWYTH THANE

ton had taken Boston away from Howe. It sounded better that way than to say that Howe had evacuated Boston for Halifax by sea. Washington hadn't exactly won a battle, maybe, but it came to the same thing—he had occupied Dorchester Heights and fired shells into Boston till it got too hot for Howe, hadn't he? And he was in Boston, wasn't he, and what more did you want?

The Virginia Convention met at Williamsburg in May, led by George Mason and Patrick Henry—Jefferson was in Philadelphia—and passed a unanimous vote: "*Resolved*, that the delegates appointed to represent this colony in general Congress be instructed to propose to that respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and Independent states, absolved from all allegiance to, or dependence upon, the Crown or Parliament of Great Britain. . . ."

That evening Williamsburg made carnival, the church bells were rung, guns were fired, and the British flag was hauled down from the cupola of the Capitol and the new rattlesnake flag of the United Colonies was run up in its place. Patrick Henry was elected the first governor under the new regime in June.

IT was not pleasant hearing in August that Hessian troops had been landed on Staten Island and presumably would soon be used against Washington's fortified positions at Brooklyn Heights and New York.

St. John and his womenfolk had gone to visit at the Greensleeves plantation, and Julian sat down with a heavy heart to report to St. John by letter, as he had engaged to do if anything developed. This Hessian intrusion would be the last straw. St. John would go overboard now, and would expect every right-thinking man of his acquaintance to do the same.

Aunt Anabel, all smiles, brought the letter to St. John in the airy drawing room of the Greensleeves plantation. Regina sat by a long window, with a breeze stirring the lace at her neck and elbows, a piece of embroidery in her hands. St. John was astride a chair near by, his chin resting on his clasped hands on the back of it while he teased her for being too bone-lazy to set foot in the garden with him, and David Allen, the Loyalist Marylander who found such favor in Regina's eyes, watched them moodily from the window seat—while Dorothea's fingers whispered on the spinet keys.

"You needn't all pretend to look the other way," St. John said as he broke the seal of Julian's letter. "I know I'll have to read it to you!"

But he didn't read it to them. He read it swiftly to himself, then he folded it shut again, and rose from his chair and turned away from them down the long room.

"SINJIE, is it bad news?" asked Aunt Anabel, thinking of fire and fever and sudden death.

He told them what it was, briefly, looking rather green around the mouth. "And that settles it," he added through his teeth. "From now on, this is my war!"

Regina spoke sharply: "What do you mean, St. John? What are you going to do?"

The spinet was silent now, for Dorothea knew only too well what he would do.

"I am going back to Williamsburg at once to find out how I can be of most use," said St. John more calmly. Too calmly. "If Virginia has enough officers, or if there is going to be a delay about commissions, I shall go straight to Washington at New York and offer to ride express—copy dispatches—carry a musket—dig earthworks like a slave—empty slops. What in hell does it matter what I do, so long as I am *in* it, and not sitting round on my backside talking about it!"

"There is no need to be vulgar, St. John," said Regina coldly; for there was terror in her heart now lest he be killed, as well as anger at his lust for this unseemly war.

"I *feel* vulgar!" he snapped. "I've left it too long, as it is. Too many other people are going to get a shot at those meddlesome Germans before I do!"

David Allen rose with lazy grace from the window seat, feeling that at last the Lord had delivered St. John Sprague into his hands.

(*Continued on page 60*)

HALSEY of the SOLOMONS

Thumbnail sketch of the minute man of the South Pacific

BY CHARLES RAWLINGS

THE Solomons were just beginning to rumble when the assignment came to me. "Find out," it said, "what manner of man is our Admiral of the South Pacific."

The thunder grew louder. In one short week, listening here at home to its distant crashing, we ran the gamut of emotions. Rumor, doubt, suspicion, despair, a growing hope—all these screamed from newspaper headlines as I walked away from interviews with Vice-Admiral William Halsey's classmates and shipmates.

Vice-Admiral "Bill" climbs to the bridge of his flagship, a carrier, during a task-force operation against the Japs.

The first interview was quiet. A navy commander who had been in the Admiral's class at Annapolis wondered if what I would write could ever be anything but an obituary. The last one was jubilant. A navy captain agreed that his classmate and shipmate Big Bill Halsey might be the savior of the Pacific.

I was told that when his task force sails from Honolulu the shores and jetties are black with people—navy and army, civilian, Kanaka—shouting, cheering, weeping, waving. The Admiral stands on his flagship's bridge, gravely acknowledging the tribute by slow salutes. Down his grim face trickle, say those who have seen, slow tears.

Halsey, who is now sixty, was born into a navy family of Elizabeth, New Jersey. One of the yarns he enjoys most concerns his father, a navy commander, who was a man of big voice, and was proud that his son seemed to be developing the voice to command too. The undergraduates of the Annapolis class of 1904 went off on a training cruise under canvas, with the future Admiral's father in command. It was night. A rain squall blew up and it was decided to shorten sail. The duty watch of midshipmen was ordered aloft.

"Seems to me I can hear young Bill's voice up there," said the commander.

The officer of the deck pointed his trumpet aloft at the maintop.

"Halsey!" he called.

"Yes, sir," said young Halsey, crawling out from beneath a tarpaulin on the deck where he had been "soldiering" close at hand.

"YOU could always laugh with and at Bill," says one of his good friends, a captain of carriers. "He left the Pensacola command and came to Honolulu to relieve me in the Saratoga. He had his navy clothes shipped ahead and flew from the West Coast. My paymaster found out that all Bill's clothes had been shipped by freight and would arrive two weeks behind him.

"He's a hard man to fit. He has an enormous chest and his hat size is eight and a half. He arrived. He came aboard, and I told him the sad news about his clothes.

"'Loan me a coat,' he said. 'What's a shipmate for?'

"One button could be made to toggle in its buttonhole. My hat

perched atop his head and rocked there.

"'This won't do,' he said. 'Ken, I've got to get another hat.'

"'Not in Hawaii,' I said. 'There's not an eight-and-a-half hat west of Frisco.'

"He scratched his head. 'You know,' he said, 'I've always noticed chief petty officers have big heads. I'll wager you've got a C. P. O. aboard who would loan me a hat.'

"'If we had, Bill,' I said, 'the hat wouldn't be brass. The C. P. O. lacks the admiral's ostentation.'

"'So he does,' said Bill. 'I'd forgotten about that.'"

BUT Halsey is no "spit-and-polish" officer. He is more interested in how well his men can shoot than in strict observance of the regulations. Once, when his feet hurt him, he appeared on his flag bridge wearing carpet slippers.

He did not make the football team at Annapolis his first year but played on the "Hustlers," the second team. His last three years he was a first-string back. The gold sword for supremacy in athletics was awarded him by his class.

After graduation he went smartly into destroyers. Old tough torpedo-boatmen brought him up. They were a reckless, undaunted bunch, most of them veterans of the Spanish-American War. Destroyers as we know them today were then evolving, and the navy wanted the evolution to go on as fast as possible. As each experimental class came off the ways, their men were expected to prove their worth. The only way to do that was to burn them up. They were put into almost foolhardy maneuvers. Sometimes, to every one's surprise, the maneuver succeeded. Other times docks were demolished or ships were in collision, aground, broken down.

Halsey then as now had a complete sense of loyalty to subordinates. If ships were lost or damaged on maneuver, it was always a maneuver executed exactly as *he* had ordered it. If criticism glowered from above, he took it on his own broad shoulders.

In the last war he was based in Queenstown, Ireland, with a division of destroyers His first decoration, the Navy Cross, was awarded for duty in the Channel.

After the war he was stationed on the West Coast under an old friend, Captain Taylor Evans, the son of Fighting Bob of Spanish-American War fame. There they continued developing destroyer tactics. Their theories met with smiles from above—quiet battleship smiles. Halsey asked and was granted permission to prove their point. The maneuver chosen was, prophetically, designed for night action—and so well did Halsey carry it out that the dummy torpedoes of his attacking force penetrated the plate of one cruiser and dented the underbody of the battleship Maryland.

In 1927 he was stationed at the Naval Academy in charge of aviation. Air-minded from the first, he had begun in 1912 the quest for permission to become a pilot. His first practice landing greatly diminished his chances. The ship, a Curtiss pusher seaplane, tillered with a joy stick made in the form of a yoke.

"Bill brought her down like a bird to kiss the Severn," his friends say. "But his chest, plus the life preserver of those days, was too thick to allow the joy-stick yoke to come back far enough. He couldn't quite level her off. She went in nose first in a slow jay-bird dive. Bill floated up unharmed but red with rage."

The authorities then ruled that he was too heavy to become a navy pilot. Later, they told him he was too old. But in 1934 the long-sought permission was granted him, and he became a pilot. He was fifty-two that year.

HALSEY first attracted attention by his stunning work last February in the Gilbert and Marshall attack, for which he was given the Distinguished Service Cross. He stuck his carrier right in the middle of the Jap bases, and kept it there until he finished the job. His audacity so stupefied the Japanese that they didn't locate him until his flyers had knocked out most of their planes. Result: he was appointed COMSOPAC (Commander in the South Pacific) last October. The fourth to take command of the South Pacific since Pearl Harbor, he was directly in charge during the Solomons attack of November 12-15, when the United States fleet scored a victory that, according to Admiral Nimitz, surpassed anything of the kind in the history of the United States Navy.

How he managed to win the early rounds of that battle will make a great chapter of our history. Stepping into command as he did, with the gauge of battle closed, seemed at the time an almost impossible handicap. Sea fighting today is far-flung. Communications break and falter. The plan of battle is "indoctrinated" ashore before a fleet sails, and must be followed through. Yet Admiral Halsey stepped into such a plan in the middle of a faltering battle, and somehow pulled off its first round—and then, historically, the second!

"Maybe," said one of his classmates, "he was just too tough to know he couldn't win—Bill would be—so he went on and won."

That's Halsey of the Solomons.

THE END

Often, when at sea, the Vice-Admiral sits all day long on this high stool. The others on the bridge are his staff.

Via U. S. Sub to Japan—and Back!

Continued from Page 19

One of the officers has moved from his bunk and is sleeping on the wardroom table so that the cook can bunk alone. And Brownie, the boy from the chain cafeteria in Chicago, is worth his weight in gold. He's taken over the cooking and he's doing a swell job at it. We are feeding extra well on this home run, using up supplies there is no reason now to hoard. Roast pork is a favorite. So is steak. But you can't feed sub men lamb. They just don't like it.

Radio Tokyo gives us a few laughs each night as we pick up the short wave in English. The first night homeward bound we picked up an excited account of the sinking of an American submarine in our patrol area. The destroyer skipper who depth-charged the Eel must have been overenthusiastic in his report.

ALTHOUGH we are in more or less friendly waters now, I order daytime dives again and run under water. It would be too bad if one of our own land-based planes popped us off now. My job is not yet done. I'm one of the first sub skippers to raid the Japanese coast and I have information that must get home.

We make a routine dive at dawn and run under the surface. Constant periscope watch again. I am having breakfast when the officer on watch yells:

"Enemy submarine!"

I spill the coffee as I hit for the periscope. The gong clangs for battle stations. The phone blares out:

"All hands man battle stations submerged!"

The phonograph is rasping away, with a throaty tenor advising us to "Look for the silver lining when the dark clouds come your way. . . ." Somebody chokes the tenor.

The Jap is boiling along the surface. Cocky. In our half of the ocean too. They don't think much of us. I've been waiting for this baby. This is probably the fellow who shelled Midway a few days ago.

Here he is steaming up in front of my tubes, made to order. Jap sub all right. No mistaking that type. He's so close I can see the faces of the six men on the bridge, Jap teeth and all. The magnifying periscope picks them up and brings them a few feet from me. They're laughing. Homeward bound. Just like us.

"Get one and two ready!"

"One and two torpedoes ready, sir!"

I reach for the firing pickle. I want to plant the fish in this fellow myself. A gunnery officer is ticking off the angles. One of these fish is for my friends who didn't get out of Pearl Harbor. I press the pickle.

The phone says, "One and two fired, sir!"

I'm frozen to the periscope. But I don't forget to let the crew know. "There they go! Hot, straight, and normal! They're in there for a bull's-eye!" I yell it into the phones.

The Eel jarred twice as the torpedoes sped away in double tracks of foaming water. The fish are down the track at short range. The seas are high and I can't see them hit. The diving officer curses and works frantically at the controls to equalize the weight we lost when the torpedoes left.

The periscope washes clear again. There is nothing on the surface. Again we are alone on the Pacific. Did we hit him? Did he submerge in time? We feel certain that we at least damaged him.

We're headed home again. One last big spread with the food we have left. Surface for the night run with the slap of fresh sea water in the face as we go up through the hatch, and the coal-black decks dripping away into the starlit night. The bowl of heaven is over us and God has been good to us.

THAT'S our homeland this morning, the green waving shores of Oahu growing bright in the sunshine through our periscope. I tell the diving officer for the last time:

"Blow her up!"

That's our own patrol boat coming out to meet us. She'll escort us in. Those are our own planes droning watchfully overhead. No more strain of night patrol in danger-filled Jap waters. No more dodging the albatross that wheels down from the sun like a marauding Jap bomber. This is home again.

Again we are running up the channel we came down so long ago. That was two days after Pearl Harbor. The wreckage that filled us with despair then is gone. There is a bustle of meaningful activity.

America is at war!

Hawsers thump aboard and we make them fast and warp alongside. I can feel the strain of long patrol leaving me now. And in its place is a feeling of utter weariness. We'll have a couple of weeks' rest coming and we need it.

Two weeks just to rest. No more lookouts. Relax. This is home.

The Texas boy clambers up the hatch for the first time since we left here. He's blinking in the light.

"Gosh," he says. "Sunshine!"

THE END

LATE in the evening the two them went dutifully out to lo at the twelve-foot Christm tree that sprawled across the porc They surveyed it without enthus asm.

"The stand is down cellar, I su pose, and the ornaments in the a tic," he said at last. "I don't see wh they are always separated by thr flights of stairs."

"You never had to bother wi either before," Ellen defende

UPON TH

BY MARJOR

ILLUSTRATED

"Harry always set it up and I helpe him decorate it." For a moment the were silent. For the first time twenty-two years Harry wasn there. He was in a camp down Sout and they hadn't heard from him f ten days; not even a Christmas car

"Look," she said abruptly. "Wh do we bother with it? There'll b no one but us to see it."

"Well, if you're sure you don care—"

"I don't care." They went back t the living-room fire, but she didn pick up her book again. "There' a couple of parties going on tonigh Henry. It's only eleven thirty, if yo want to do something for a while

He tamped his pipe and frowned little. "Well, I don't know. Mayb I'm sleepy, or something." Sh stared at him. This, from Henry, th incorrigible night owl!

"Then let's go to bed, for goodnes sake. I wouldn't mind nine hour sleep for a change."

"How about the stockings?"

"Oh, bother the stockings!"

"Ellen, you boast you've neve missed hanging up your stocking single Christmas Eve in your life.

"Then it's time an old lady lik me grew up." Her tone was ligh "Anyway, the rule was only on present in the stocking. We can ex change them the minute we wak up, and then have the rest of th presents after breakfast, as usua It does seem a little silly to g through all the motions as solemnl as though—" He understood the un finished comment—as though Harr were here, Harry who—even whe

MIDNIGHT CLEAR

ARLETON

T HOLBROOKE

Ellen caught at Harry's arm. "Not now! You look at it as soon as you wake up."

e was grown—refused to change one tradition or omit a single rite. They went up to the bedroom and had started to draw the shades, when suddenly the house echoed to the exuberant slam of the downstairs door. They looked at each other dazedly. Only one other person had a key to that front door. Then they heard his voice: "Hi, mom! Hi, dad!" There was the pound of his feet up the stairs and those long strides of his crossing the hall. And all at once the room was filled with a uniformed greatcoat and laughter and poundings on the back and a few gay tears. Finally, from the chaos: "Why didn't you wire? How long is your leave?"

Harry grinned down at them. "Here's where you two get told off! I come home, and what do I find? No tree, no stocking, no lights. Never let it happen again!" with mock ferocity. "A chap likes to know that Christmas is doing business as usual —at home." He tipped his mother's chin up.

"Oh, Harry—"

"Not one word of information do you get from me until you've done your duty by Christmas Eve! We have just twenty minutes to trim the tree and hang the stockings. Because on the crack of twelve we start singing carols. Remember?"

They remembered.

"What'll I do about your stocking?" Ellen wailed suddenly. "I sent your Christmas box to camp. Did you get it?"

Harry was cheerful. "It'll catch up with me eventually, if I know Uncle Sam," he said. "But I want to find one thing in my stocking from Santa, as usual. Something silly. So scratch your brains while we set up the tree."

With three pairs of hands the tree was quickly trimmed. While Harry adjusted the tiny lights, his father fastened the stockings, bulging with candy and oranges, above the fireplace in the adjoining library.

"Listen, Henry," Ellen whispered. "I'm going to put his first-grade report card in his stocking!" She thrust it furtively under her husband's nose. "He'll laugh—but I think it's pretty good for a seven-year-old. Look. It says he has a sunny disposition and the qualities for leadership, but that he asks too many questions and—" She put the card quickly into Harry's sock as her son stepped through the archway.

"Twelve o'clock," he said. His arms went about Ellen's and Henry's shoulders as they stood there, hearing the wild chiming of the church bells. "Time for carols now."

He sat down at the piano, his father and mother standing close behind him. This is the triangle of the family, Ellen thought, and Harry is the apex. I won't look or think one second ahead.

They sang It Came Upon the Midnight Clear, and Hark! the Herald Angels Sing, and all the others. When they had finished, his mother put her arms coaxingly around Harry's neck. "Isn't it time now to stop and really talk to us, darling?"

He laughed and shook his head. "Not just yet. Now for the stockings." But Ellen caught at her son's arm as he reached for his own sock.

"Not now!" She professed to be shocked. "Officially, Santa Claus brings your present while you're asleep. You look at it as soon as you wake up. Have you forgotten?"

"No," Harry said, "I haven't forgotten. But I'd better look now." He gripped his father's hand and with his other arm caught his mother to him. "It's swell that Christmas is sort of like an accordion, isn't it? You can pull it out over days and days, or squeeze it together into half an hour. But it's still Christmas. Isn't it?" he urged again. He could feel both of them stiffen against some premonition.

"You see," he went on gently, "I'll have to leave in ten minutes. My transport sails at 3 A. M."

THE END

GOD AND THE GENERAL

Continued from Page 11

holy war—one that conceivably may end in the Holy Land itself. In opposing the Axis on Malta he was doing his part to save Christianity.

Walking the blistered streets of Malta, Dobbie often seemed to walk with God. There were times when people seemed to feel that he *was* God. As the young officer said, "He did something to me." Another young officer said, "I'll never be the skeptic that I was before I served with him on Malta."

He "did something" also to the men who served with him during World War I. One of them, an officer, told me:

"When things were blackest and one defeat had followed another, it was wonderful to see how the young officers and men admired the big fellow in the worn greatcoat who never revealed the slightest sign of fear. When we'd say, 'But, Dob, how do you know that God doesn't intend us to have a good beating? Perhaps we deserve it,' I can still hear him answering slowly, 'There is no fear whatever that He will allow us to be beaten by the Germans. We may suffer, but we cannot be beaten.' "

And it did in fact so happen that past midnight of November 10, 1918, a dispatch rider came racing to him at the British G. H. Q., saluted, and handed him an envelope with the words, 'From Marshal Foch, sir.' He glanced at it, smiled. So it came about that Lieutenant Colonel Dobbie, D. S. O., an officer on Haig's staff, dictated to all the British troops on the western front this historic telegram:

"Hostilities will cease at 11.00 hours today. Troops will stand fast at the line reached at that hour. There will be no fraternization with the enemy."

DOBBIE is among the most thoroughly educated men in the British service. At Charterhouse, one of the best of England's special preparatory schools, he was an exceptional classical scholar, fascinated by ancient military campaigns. By competitive examination he qualified for the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, which qualified him for the Engineers and the study of military engineering at Chatham. From there he went off to the Boer War as a second lieutenant, to begin forty-odd years of continuous military service.

But it takes more than training or experience to make a great leader. On his desk on Malta he has the text, "If ye lack wisdom, ask of God."

When in one of our interviews we said that "there were no atheists in the fox holes of Bataan," he said, "At the end of everything it is God on whom we must rely."

"*You* believe that," I ventured. "But not every one is so fortunate as to have faith as deep as yours."

"When I was a boy in my teens," he said quietly, "I heard it said that Christ came to earth to reveal the ways of God to man, but I had never taken it in. I got to thinking it might be a sensible thing to take the trouble to turn to the Bible and see for myself. He was a good man, I discovered after I became acquainted with Him and the way He lived and died. It was inconceivable to me that He spoke in ignorance or would deliberately deceive us. I've read the Bible every day since then—always, if possible, before the day's work, and often before having to make decisions. It is helpful. It has a key to every puzzling situation. As a practical thing, it has been a priceless aid to me, my health, our family happiness, and my work. It has come to be like an old friend I can count on."

"As an engineer, familiar with technology," he was asked, "hasn't science, and use of scientific discoveries in war, disturbed your faith?"

"On the contrary," he said. "Nothing adduced by science runs counter to faith in God. Great scientists are the first to agree to that, at least as they grow older and wiser."

"But, general, what about the use of scientific discoveries in war to destroy or maim millions?"

He answered: "Is there any useful thing, any blessing, even food and drink, that is *not* abused if given into evil hands? Hitler is evil. The whole vicious Nazi movement is evil. It must be destroyed. It can never win. I believe that victory will come to our cause when, in the view of God, we deserve it!"

"YOU may not share old Dob's complete faith," says a young officer. "You can ask questions that he can't answer in exact and familiar terms. But you can't escape the feeling that the odds are on his side. He's right. By heaven, he's right! I'll never be the same man I was after serving with him."

At sundown, alone, you roam about the little island of Malta, and every way you turn you see devastation and wreckage. But, despite that, you know in your heart that—*Malta stands! It will not fall!* Try as you may, you cannot escape the belief that this incredible fact is due to the deep spiritual faith of "old Dob," the island's man of God.

THE END

THE GYP OF THE WEEK *By FRANK W. BROCK*

HOME DEFENSE

THE first line of defense for your home should be erected against the myriad gyps who try to sell you useless—and sometimes dangerous—home-defense gadgets and appliances for air-raid protection.

Early this year the United States Bureau of Mines developed various compounds and powders largely composed of pitch, salt, sand, and other inexpensive ingredients. These are very effective for extinguishing magnesium fires in manufacturing plants. Water accelerates a magnesium fire.

Some reliable manufacturers have packaged and trademarked these or similar compounds honestly, but some less scrupulous are offering them to homeowners at high prices for extinguishing incendiary bombs.

Although they *will* extinguish magnesium fires, the Office of Civilian Defense, Fire Underwriters and Mutual Laboratories, and all other authorities disapprove their use on incendiary bombs. Reasons: (1) None of them has any effect on fires *started* by the bomb—which are more important than the bomb itself. (2) Phosphorus bombs can be extinguished only by water. (3) The very latest lethal German bomb—now in use over England—carries an explosive charge the detonation of which can be delayed for as long as seven minutes. Any person approaching such a bomb to sprinkle powder on it would be blown to smithereens.

The Office of Civilian Defense says such extinguishers "engender in the minds of civilians a false sense of security, thus endangering lives and property in the event of an air raid."

The COMMANDOS

By ELLIOTT ARNOLD

ABRIDGED TO A READING TIME OF ONE EVENING

A Liberty BOOK

...WHAT THE CRITICS SAID ABOUT THE COMMANDOS

"A galloping tale of high adventure that sings a great cry of courage and hope."
...Iris Barry, *N. Y. Herald Tribune.*

"Ranks among the liveliest adventure stories of the War."
...Christopher Morley.

"Cuts across nations and classes with a deep knowledge of the human heart—profoundly moving."
...Jane Spence Southron, *N. Y. Times.*

IT was still early spring then and the time of the light night was not there. The smell of the North Sea came sweet over Jaeren and the air was warm and clean and belonged to the sound of the water on the dunes.

Alan looked at the sky and watched a cloud slip across the half-moon, and as the outlines of the buildings in Flekkefjord went slowly black he moved a little farther along the cobbled street.

He moved with his back to the wall, feeling his way. With one hand he held the submachine gun that was slung over his shoulder securely against his side so that it would not swing and hit the wooden wall of the building.

He was tall and lean and he moved slowly and knowingly. He wore a dark military blouse, and loose brown trousers gathered at his ankles like ski pants. He walked in his stockinged feet. His thick high shoes, laced together, hung from his neck. His face and hands were blackened with soot and he kept his mouth closed so that even his teeth would not reflect any light.

When he reached the end of the building and heard the heavy steps of the sentry, he took a knife from his belt, pressed himself hard against the wall, and waited until the sentry walked past. Then he threw his left arm around the sentry's neck, fastened one hand on his mouth and with the other hand pushed the knife into the sentry's back. When the man stopped struggling and shivered and felt loose, he lowered him gently to the ground.

He turned him over and removed the knife and wiped the blade carefully on the dead man's uniform. He quickly went through the sentry's pockets and removed all his papers, and then he pushed the body against the wall with the face turned inward.

Then Alan put on his shoes, and walked to the door of the building which the Norwegian underground had detailed as the present headquarters of the Nazi command in Flekkefjord.

He walked past the door to a window and looked inside. Three German officers, seated at a small table, were playing cards. Alan knew that with the black on his face the

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Nazis could not see him through the window and he looked carefully at the men. Two of them were young. The third was older and heavy. He was the senior officer, the one to be taken back.

Alan moved silently away from the window and around to the door again and entered the building. He reached down and touched the floor. It was wood. He rose softly and walked down the long corridor, stretching out with each foot and letting his weight down gently with each step. Once the floor creaked. Alan became rigid. He waited for thirty seconds and moved on again.

He counted the doors he passed and at the sixth door he stopped. He held the machine gun against him and

pressed his ear on the door. He heard German voices inside. He looked at the luminous dial of his wrist watch. It was exactly 11.12. He had three minutes to wait.

He felt around the machine gun. The circular drum with its fifty bullets was in place. He felt for the holster of his pistol on his right side and unsnapped the catch and tucked the leather flap behind the butt. He moved the knife up and down in its sheath. He felt again in his belt. The coil of wire was there.

He looked at his watch. The second hand was moving toward the sixty mark, and when it reached there, it would be the time. Then he heard the distant explosion and, cradling the machine gun in his arm, he kicked open the door and entered the room. The three Nazis leaped to their feet.

Alan moved the gun in a slow arc and squeezed the trigger. The two young officers slid slowly to the ground.

"Don't move," Alan said to the older officer.

The fat German leaned heavily on the table. His face was white and his jowls shuddered.

"*Gott!*" he said. "Commando!"

"Turn around," Alan said in German.

The German turned.

Alan moved behind him. He snapped the wire coil from his belt and straightened out the thin strand.

"Put your hands behind your back," he said.

The Nazi put his hands behind his back and Alan twisted the wire around them.

"One sound," he said, "and you will be with the others."

He went to the old roll-top desk, scooped up handfuls of papers and crammed them into his pockets. Then he blew out the light and moved the Nazi ahead of him.

"Remember," he said. "Do not cry out or do not try to run. The bullets can run faster."

The German nodded violently.

"Move fast," Alan said. "Turn to your right when we leave this building."

The fat officer lumbered along the road, moving awkwardly with his hands bound behind him. Soon the road left the village and followed the line of the beach.

They pushed through new heather until they came to the water front. A few minutes later another man in dark brown crept out of the forest.

"Sorry, Alan," he said, "I'm a little late."

"Enjoy yourself?"

"Quite. What have we here? A nice fat one."

"Hurry," Alan said.

"Right. Come along, fatty."

The three men went to a tussock of creeping shrubs and pushed it aside. Underneath was a collapsible rubber boat.

They lifted the boat into the water and climbed in.

"Let fatty row," the other man said. "Do him good."

Alan laughed. "All right, Chalmers."

Alan took a pair of wire-cutters from his belt and bit off the wire around the Nazi's wrists. The German sat in the middle of the boat and took the oars. Alan held the revolver in his lap.

"All right," he said.

The German started to row. Off the shore the water got a little rougher and the fragile boat bobbed wildly.

They were well clear of the land now. The fire had spread through the village and the roofs of the buildings were resting sharply against the red flames. The wind shifted and for a moment Alan could smell the burning wood, and then all he could smell was the clean air over the water again. He breathed in deeply and felt again the slow, relaxed reaction. The job had been done again and done well and on schedule.

"Arm bother you?" he asked Chalmers.

"No. It's nothing. A scratch."

"Good."

"How many did you get?"

"Three I'm sure of, two of them with gold braid. Maybe a couple more."

The German was pulling hard in the rough water. His face was red and he was gasping. It was cold over the water but the sweat was trickling down his face. His little eyes were almost closed and lost in the fat in his cheeks.

Presently the long black shape of a submarine made itself visible in the night and the rubber boat scraped against its side.

"Back so soon," an English-accented voice said. "You lads *do* hurry."

Two sailors held the boat and Alan and Chalmers pushed the Nazi on deck and then climbed up themselves. They hoisted the rubber boat out of the water and folded it up and then doubled up the oars.

They pushed the Nazi down the open hatch and climbed in after him. The submarine officer and the two sailors climbed in and lowered the cap of the hatch. Then the muffled motor of the submarine picked up and there was the feel of increased resistance as the submarine went below water and moved back toward Scotland.

THAT night the British planes came early and suddenly and swept low across the Sola airport, and in Stavanger the noise of the exploding bombs echoed dully. Then fire rose in the hangars and the sky at Sola, just six miles away, was red. The Norwegians walked through the darkened streets of Stavanger and looked at each other and smiled.

The woman in the large house on St. Olav's Street looked hard at the sky from the window of her bedroom. She was tall and very slim and her hair was black and curled short and upward around her face. In the flat gray light that came through the window from the outside, she looked tired and drawn. Next to the woman stood an old man.

"I wonder if the mist travels far into the sea," the woman said. "It may be that he will not come tonight, Sigurd."

The old man shook his head slowly. "They came to Sola," he said. "He has not once failed, Fru Larsen. He will be here."

"What time is it?" she asked.

"Not yet nine o'clock."

"Was the damage much at Sola?"

"They admit five planes and several buildings."

"Are there many downstairs tonight?" she asked.

"The usual number."

She mashed out her cigarette. "The Germans enjoy themselves in our home, don't they, Sigurd?"

"Yes, Fru Larsen." Sigurd lowered his head.

"Is Paul here yet?"

"Not yet."

"You better go down now for a few moments, Sigurd, and see that everything is all right."

The old servant nodded and left the room. The woman looked out into the fog. She heard a knock on the door.

"Come in," she said. Sigurd was back.

"Captain Dichter has arrived," he said.

"Oh." Fru Larsen stiffened. "Is he in a good humor tonight?"

"He is a little angry about Sola."

The woman smiled. Then her face got suddenly drawn. "You know he is beginning to suspect?"

Sigurd nodded. "I have seen."

"It must be quite a torment for the Nazi," she said. Her voice, ordinarily low and husky, now grated sharply. "He loves me."

The old man nodded.

"It is a distinction I have," she said. "Paul loves his Führer and he loves me. I think we are the only two persons he loves in this world. But, Sigurd, it is becoming almost impossible to go on with him."

The old man did not answer her for a moment. The woman shook her head.

Sigurd looked at her slowly. He walked up to her and put his hand on her shoulder.

"Nicole," he said, "it is more impossible to stop."

She nodded. "You do not often call me that, Sigurd."

"It is now close to the time," said Sigurd. "Ivar will be here."

She looked at her watch. "Is everything ready?"

"Yes."

"The radio was tested this afternoon?"

"It is working perfectly."

"Let us go, then."

She lifted her head high. Now, at work, there were no fears; her eyes were large, blue, and clear as she walked across the room. Two flights down they came to another door. They opened it slowly. A peasant boy stood there.

"God aften, Fru Larsen," he whispered.

"God aften, Ivar," she said. "You are ready to leave?"

"Yes, madame."

"Here is the message." Sigurd handed it to her and she gave it to the boy. "Go with God," she said. "Let Sigurd know when you return."

Then she re-entered the house and walked slowly up the worn steps. This house, the home of Fru Nicole Larsen, widow of a wealthy canner, was one of the most popular officer hangouts in Stavanger. Here, away from the hate-filled Norwegian people, the German officers of occupation could drink and eat without fear.

THE large living room of the home was now filled with Nazi officers. There were a few women, almost all of them imported from Germany. On a long table at the end of the room was a huge bowl of Norwegian punch, and next to it were bottles of aquavit and bottles of beer. Another table was covered with smörrebröd, dozens of the single-deck sandwiches covered with fish prepared in dozens of ways. In a bowl was the dark-brown gjetost, fresh from a peasant farm.

In the old days this richness of food and drink could have been found in every home. Now it was commandeered by the Nazis from half of Sörland.

Nicole stood in the entrance and looked through the smoke-filled room. When her eyes rested on a German captain seated at a small coffee table, she nodded. He rose stiffly and bowed. He was above medium height and his face was narrow and rigidly handsome. He wore a small thin mustache.

Nicole stood still and looked at him; he did not move. Then she walked toward him. He smiled broadly.

"Let me get you something to drink."

"Just some sherry," she said.

"Not sherry," he said. "Some schnapps."

"Perhaps later," she said.

He tightened his jaws. "You know I prefer for you to drink what I am drinking," he said.

"All right," she said. "I will have some aquavit."

He smiled again. "Good. I will get it for you."

She sat down wearily. He returned with a dram of schnapps, still smiling. Each time his choice conquered hers it was a new victory for him and he needed these successes constantly.

"I did not know whether I could get here tonight," he said. "You know I flew to Oslo yesterday."

"I am glad you were able to get here."

He took her hand and squeezed it, doing it prominently so his gesture could be seen. "I would have come from anywhere."

"What did you do in Oslo?" she asked.

"Some minor trouble. The wheels of a freight car were tampered with and there was an accident. I had to make a report on it." He suddenly sat upright and then tossed the drink off and looked at her. "We shall find the guilty ones, Nicole," he said slowly. "We always find the guilty ones. It is no use for you Norwegians. I say it to you for all Norwegians. It is no use."

Nicole felt her heart pounding and she quickly drained the glass. "Why do you say this to me?" she asked. "Are you implying that I know anything about the cause of this accident?"

He turned white. "Certainly not, Nicole."

She looked full into his face and lifted her head. He met her eyes for a moment and then looked down.

"We have already executed ten men for this," he said, suddenly looking up.

"Paul," she said.

"We selected ten men in the crowd that stood around the wrecked train and placed them in front of a car and executed them." He smiled and looked at her. "It really was quite effective, Nicole. I do not think the people of that neighborhood will work for the underground again."

Then he laughed loudly. "It is a night for drinking," he said. "Let us have plenty of schnapps. I enjoy this Norwegian schnapps of yours."

"Good," she said. She closed her eyes for a moment.

A Nazi lieutenant now sat down to the piano and began to play American music. He played it loudly and with a firm unchanging rhythm, until it sounded like German marching music. The officers sang the songs in German. Then the lieutenant sang other American songs in English with a heavy accent.

Nicole wanted to close her ears; if she could just shut out the sound as she could shut out sight. Anything American belonged to Alan, she thought. She thought, Alan, and then she finished the dram quickly.

There was a point she had to reach, she knew, and a point where she had to stop. Before that point there was too much of the sickness inside of her, and after that point she might lose herself entirely. But there, right there, right on that one point, she had to stop.

Dichter leaned over and kissed her.

"We must wait a little while," she said gently. "There are still so many guests." Where was Alan? she thought. Was the fog too thick? And then she heard it. She heard it faint and away and then it grew stronger.

"A plane," Dichter said. He got up quickly and walked to a window. "It must be one of ours."

"One of yours," she repeated. Then there was another sound, the sharp, quick, repeated, hard sound of the anti-aircraft. "It's not one of yours," she said, fighting to keep the excitement out of her voice. "They are shooting at it."

Dichter listened. He had sobered amazingly. "It is only one," he said. "The fool! What can one do?"

The sound was very loud now. Nicole listened to the plane and then she had another drink fast.

Dichter had several more drinks, laughing loudly at the one-plane invasion, and then later he got up, his eyes almost closed with drink, and took her hand.

LIEUTENANT ALAN LOWELL stood in front of a tree in the Scottish woods near Wick and pretended he was a Nazi guard. He listened intently and then he whirled around and pointed his revolver at the huge Pole three yards away from him.

"No good," he said to the Pole. "I heard you again."

The Pole lumbered up, his face long and unhappy. "In Poland I am good hunter," he said. "I walk through forest, no noise. I have nervousness now."

"I know," Alan said. "Try it again, Ted."

"Thanks you, Lieutenant Lowell."

"Take it easy, Ted. There never is a rush about these things. Let me see the matches in your pocket."

The Pole reached into his pocket and took out a small

box of wooden matches. Alan slid open the box. It was only half full.

"I told you about this yesterday," he said. "Remember, the box must be full or else you must stuff it up with paper. When it is half empty the matches rattle. They can be heard."

The Pole looked sheepishly at the matches. "It is so many things to remember," he said. He sat down on a rock and put his head in his hands. "This head is not smart."

Alan sat down next to him. "Listen, Ted," he said. "It takes time. Believe me, we were all the same way at the beginning. Try it again."

"Yes, sir." The Pole grinned a wide, snaggle-toothed grin.

"Walk away for five minutes and then try again. From any direction."

THE Pole hurried into the woods. Alan stood in front of the tree again and waited. The Pole was a new one. He had come up three days before from a Commando basic-training school in England, full of furious eagerness for all the Commando work. He had had months of preparation and he thought he would go right out on the raids, but he discovered he was only beginning to learn. At the raiding base soldiers and officers trained constantly on a rigid timetable.

There could be no letdown. The raiders had won the victory of initiative; they had created the first shock force striking at the enemy in western Europe since Dunkirk, and they could not allow that advantage to lapse. And to maintain it they needed muscles that were worked to their last degree of co-ordination, minds that were brought to their highest degree of initiative. They had to have the heads and bodies to keep up with the hate in their hearts, and so, in between the raids, they worked with passion and fury.

Suddenly a hand was thrown around Alan's mouth and a fist jammed itself into his back.

"Good," he said. "Perfect. I didn't hear you."

The Pole rushed around and grinned his wonderful grin. "I said it," he said joyously. "In Poland I am hunter."

"You'll be a hunter in Norway too."

The Pole nodded excitedly. "Then I go out soon?"

"Soon enough."

They walked out of the woods and back to the camp, where several teams of officers and men were playing rugby. That was another phase of the training. The officers and privates played together, and the officers had always to show the privates that they were better and stronger than any one of them. There could be no unfit leaders and the men had to respect to the death every officer who commanded them.

A man applying for Commando training from the British regular army first was given a physical examination. After he passed that, his background was thoroughly investigated. If he was married he was summarily rejected, save in very few instances. The Commando work required recklessness and abandonment; and the officers had found that married men as a class had too much responsibility for this work.

And together with the Englishmen and Scotsmen and Irishmen and men from Wales, there were the refugees from Poland and Norway and France, from Denmark, and from even as far away as the Balkans. The background of the men from Norway and France proved invaluable to the men who planned the raids, planned them with care and cunning to strike terror and destruction into the ranks of the conquerors on the mainland.

Once accepted in the primary Commando schools, the men were trained for weeks in boxing, wrestling, jujitsu, swimming. Gradually the work was stepped up, and in full swing the day's training lasted for ten hours or more. The trainees were taught to be expert with both rifle and pistol, and then with the submachine gun.

They were taught the profound technique of knifework, the secrets of the forest, taught how to travel through woods. They learned how to dress birds and fish and how to cook them. The basis of this training was Indian lore from the early days in America.

Part of the standard equipment of a fully dressed Commando was a coil of thin wire. The students were shown how to weave this wire into a meshed net, how to string the net between trees, and how to wait patiently beneath it until a bird caught himself in it—and provided a meal for a man who might be alone in the woods and foodless and unable to risk firing a shot at game. The men also carried fishhooks and were taught how to affix a hook on that same wire and use the wire for a fishing line. And they learned how to use the wire as a garrote.

Dietary experts put them on long fasts. They were trained to make endless marches on infinitesimal portions of food and drink. They learned how to flush the inside of their mouths with a minimum of water and make that suffice. For stretches lasting days they lived on bread and water, on concentrated food pills.

Their exercising was, if anything, more strenuous during these foodless and waterless days. It was then, usually, they were trained in climbing walls, starting with six-foot walls and then gradually reaching ten-foot walls. One man would bend against the wall, and two others in full equipment would race up his back and then, straddling the top, hoist the first man up.

Professional athletes trained the men in the art of throwing grenades in the easy underhand sweep that softball pitchers use, throwing them first through huge square frames; and then, as their accuracy increased, the frames were gradually made smaller, until, after a few months, a man could toss a grenade through an ordinary-sized window at a hundred feet.

They learned the art of using dynamite—just where to put the sticks to bring down a building or a bridge, just how much to use and how to time the detonation.

Along with these instructions went lessons in cutting barbed wire. They were taught how to snip an entanglement in circular cuts so that when the last cut was made a round section of the wire, just wide enough for a man with a pack on his back, fell out.

The evenings were spent in learning the various wireless codes, the Morse and Continental, in learning how to read maps and to draw them, as well as to make surveys of unfamiliar territory.

As part of the wind-up of preliminary training, they had to march forty and fifty miles through dense countryside, through forests and up hills, through mud and underbrush, across treacherous moorlands, putting their training to practical use, catching wild game with their handmade traps, catching fish, and building fires that gave off a minimum smoke. And then, after this, they ended the march by swimming across a half-mile stream with full packs on their backs, and swimming in such a way that only the lower part of their rifles, strapped diagonally across their backs, got wet.

They practiced disembarking from their attack boats for days, until they knew just how to spread out the moment the flat front was let down on the land, to spread out in planned lack of formation, and to go to work.

By this time only five out of every hundred men who applied for Commando work were still there; the rest of them had been washed out. These men were ready, and polished to a fine edge, too, was their hate. It was said that the ideal Commando was a man whose mother, wife, and children had been killed by the same Nazi bomb.

THAT night Alan sat in his quarters in the officers' building and tried to read. He took a small worn leather-covered volume of Dowson from a little table. Where had he not read those same poems, he thought. Teruel, and that night on the Ebro, and he remembered that afternoon of sun in the Vienna woods when he attempted to translate some of them to Nicole. And the one time when his life itself seemed part of a poem, when the things happened that happened only in poems—that time there was no Dowson, just the true singing living, the cadenced pacing of the cadenced minutes. Nick, he thought, my darling Nick, and he rose and put his face

to the window and looked eastward, looked at where she was.

There was a knock on the door and he said, "Come in." An orderly stepped in. "Compliments of Major Wallace," he said. "He would like to see you immediately, sir."

"All right," Alan said.

Major Wallace and a Norwegian lieutenant were standing over a map.

"We have received information," the major said, "that a new garrison has been stationed in Halleland. There is also a fish-oil factory there and a railroad terminus that is being used as a radio station."

He pointed to a part of the map. "This is where the garrison is stationed. We want as many men taken alive as possible."

Alan looked at the map. To the south of the city was a square.

"Is this the fish-oil factory, sir?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And this is the railroad station?"

"Yes," Major Wallace replied. "One group coming in from the north could surround the garrison, while a group coming up from the south could break up and destroy the factory and radio at the same time."

"Then the northern squadron could join the others and go back out the south road and return to the boat," Ole, the Norwegian lieutenant, said.

"Exactly."

"When do we start?" Alan asked.

"The destroyer is waiting now." Major Wallace took a long list of names from his desk. "Pick your men, gentlemen," he said.

Alan ran his eyes down the list and checked off names, selecting Norwegians whenever possible. He came finally to the Pole's name, thought for a moment, and then put a check after it.

"Is he ready?" Major Wallace asked.

"Yes, sir," Alan replied. "I certified him myself."

"He's rather green, isn't he?"

"I know, sir. I think he rather deserves this, though. He's had rather more than his share, I think."

"All right."

Major Wallace picked up the map.

"Be prepared in an hour," he said. "I will have individual maps prepared for each of you."

Alan and Ole left the room and went back to their own quarters. Alan got out of his uniform and into battle dress. Then he checked on his equipment.

In less than an hour two squadrons of men were standing at attention facing each other. Each man was equipped exactly alike. Each wore a flat steel helmet, covered with a netting to make it less visible.

"Everything checked?" Alan asked Chalmers. "Matches?"

"Yes, sir."

At a signal they climbed into a flat-bottomed beetle boat. The Diesel engine started and the boat headed out into the night to meet the destroyer. Alan sat alone near the square vertical front of the boat. He looked up at the sky, covered with stars. He lifted his collar around his neck and huddled deep in his coat. There he was again, he thought, alone and close to the high steel wings of the boat, the wings folded high and tight and secure like the wings of a confident bird, rigid and knowing. And he knew too.

Five minutes later they scraped the side of the destroyer. The men clambered up the ladder to the deck, and the beetle boat was hauled aboard.

Then the destroyer began to feel its way slowly across the North Sea.

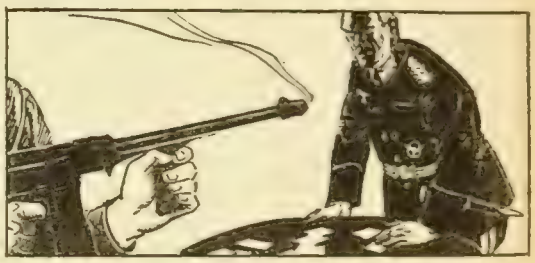
During the next day the destroyer moved carefully. At night it increased its speed, and then it slowed up again as it reached the place to drop off the raiders.

The equipment was checked again, the men covered their faces with blacking, and then, for the first time, the Commandos were told exactly where they were going and exactly what they had to do. It was a rule of procedure that only the officers in command knew the exact destination of the raiding party until the excursion in the raiding boats was actually under way.

The men lined up on the deck and the davits swung the beetle boat out and lowered it into the water. One by one the Commandos climbed into it, and the muffled Diesel motor started to throb and the boat moved in toward the skerries.

Alan called his men around him, and with a sheltered flashlight showed them the map. Each man looked carefully at the paper and memorized it immediately. Then Alan walked up to the steering wheel of the boat and sat next to the pilot, an old Norwegian fisherman named Gunnar who had sailed to England at the coming of the Nazis. He knew every inch of this shore line.

Alan heard a heavy breathing in his ear. He turned. It



was the Pole. Ted took out his amulet and kissed it. Then he lifted his huge hands and curved his fingers into claws. "Kill," he said. "I kill."

"You'll get your chance," Alan said.

The wind was rising now and he sank more deeply into his coat collar. Gunnar was staring straight ahead of him, moving the boat through the water as though he were driving on a highway. Alan turned around. The men were taut in their seats, their eyes shining. He knew the feeling they all had.

He shifted in his seat and looked at the luminous dial of his watch. He turned to the Pole. "Where do you come from?" he asked.

"Polesie."

"Family? Children?"

The muscles in the Pole's cheeks bunched and he clamped his teeth and his eyes got wild.

"Wife, yes," he said. "Boy, yes. I fight. I come back. No wife. Wife in Germany." He rubbed his face. "Boy not there. No wife. No boy."

Alan nodded. The Pole tugged on his arm. "Lieutenant," he said. "American?"

"Yes."

"Where America?"

"Maine."

"Maine?"

"One of the states." Alan suddenly felt foolish.

There was a distant drone of planes. They looked up. "We're getting in," the Norwegian said.

Then he suddenly increased the speed of the boat and there was a dull shock and then a resistance as the flat-bottomed craft rammed up the slanting beach. Gunnar pulled a lever and the front lowered swiftly and made a gangway and then, led by the two lieutenants, the men raced swiftly from the boat.

In the forest Alan lined up his men and sent out the guard for the platoon in diamond formation. One man was sent one hundred yards ahead, two others one hundred yards on either side, and a fourth remained two hundred yards in the rear. The guard in front and the two on the sides served as outposts for the moving formation. The man in the rear had orders to return at once if the platoon was surprised. It was expected he would be the only one left to report on what happened. After five minutes marching, when Alan knew he must be nearing the village, one of the men from the van appeared out of the darkness.

"Sentry," he whispered. "About fifty yards down the road."

Alan bent down and removed his shoes. Without saying a word the other men did the same. Then they walked slowly until they came to a turn in the road. Around

to the left, outlined against the sky, was the flat soup-kettle hat of a German soldier.

Alan looked at his watch and waited ten minutes to make certain the German was alone. When he was certain, he touched Ted, and said, "All right, baby, go on. But without a sound." It was a custom. The new man, the baby, always got the first Nazi.

"I kill," the Pole whispered. He moved off swiftly without a sound. Alan leaned forward, trying to see. The Pole maneuvered completely around the sentry. The sentry shifted a little; he sighed. And then, silently, slowly, almost tenderly, the huge hands of the Pole appeared behind the sentry's head and closed themselves

gently around his neck, and then the Pole emerged holding him by the neck high in the air, shaking him. Alan watched the sentry's body until it moved loosely in the air with the unjointedness of the newly dead. Then the men moved forward automatically.

When they came to the huge bulk of the factory, they moved flat against the buildings. The streets were empty. At the entrance they saw another Nazi guard. Alan told his men to wait, and slowly came behind the guard, and then knifed him through the back. As he fell the other men came up to the entrance.

"Chalmers," Alan whispered.

"Yes, sir."

"You'll keep ten men here. Put the dynamite in the basement and on the second floor. Touch off at least six switches and time the explosion"—he looked at his watch —"for twenty minutes from now."

"Right, sir."

"As soon as you start your fuses going, take your men back to the main road and wait there for us."

"Yes, sir."

Alan moved away with the balance of his platoon until they reached the railroad station. He ordered the men to lie down, and then he moved slowly to the station. He followed the line of the building until he came to a lighted window and he looked inside. Two men were seated in front of the ceiling-high panel of a transmitter. Alan went back to his men.

He sent two corporals in opposite directions with four men each to surround the building and guard against Nazi patrols. He led the rest of the men as they filtered slowly into the building. He opened the door of the radio room and entered, his revolver drawn.

"Don't make a sound or touch the wireless," he said in German.

The two men sat there, their mouths open. Slowly they raised their hands and rose from their seats. Two of the raiders gagged and bound them, and then the men distributed the dynamite through the station.

During this time Ole took his men in a wide sweep until they came upon the house in which the garrison was quartered. They surrounded the house slowly.

Ole removed a tear-gas bomb from his belt and five of his men followed him. Then the six spread out and began a slow crawl on their bellies toward the barracks.

They moved a few inches and then stopped and waited; they moved on again. Finally they were at the house. Each man selected a window and extracted a hand grenade from his belt. Then, as one man, they threw the grenades through the windows, and immediately afterward, the tear-gas bombs.

First there was the crashing of glass and then the run of explosions from the grenades, and then the wild hissing from the bombs. Germans came racing from the flaming barracks, coughing and choking. In the light of the fire their faces could be seen clearly, their eyes full of tears and crazy with fear. And when they got the bite of the tear gas out of their eyes they found themselves surrounded by the raiders at rifle point and machine-gun point.

Ole, talking rapidly, put the captured Germans—there were about fifty of them—into a tightly formed group, and assigned five of his men to guard them. Then he moved his men and prisoners until he joined Alan's forces grouped near the station, where snipers deployed by Alan had swung into action and were returning the fire of Nazi riflemen. Slowly, firing and retreating in sections, the raiders got outside the village and ceased their fire only when the darkness of the forest covered them.

As they entered the forest road they heard running footsteps behind them, and they turned again. Then they heard voices: "We are Norwegians. We wish to return with you."

"Come," Ole said.

A moment later a group of about twenty Norwegian youths came up the road.

"Which of you have families here?" Ole asked.

About half of the men stepped forward.

"You must return," Ole said. "Otherwise they will take revenge on your homes. Give me your names quickly." As each boy called off his name, Ole ordered one of the Norwegian Commandos to remember it. "The underground will communicate with you and arrange to take all of you with your families soon. Believe me."

The boys nodded.

"You will be with us soon," Ole said. "Now, return with God, and help the underground when it communicates with you."

The boys turned back on the road, and then the Commandos, with their prisoners and the rest of the Norwegians, went swiftly back to the boat. They climbed into it, pushing the Germans in ahead of them, and then the front of the boat was lifted and the motor began to throb. The boat moved out into the water.

Alan leaned back into his seat. It was over again. It was a good one again. He and Ole then counted their men. Eight were missing.

IVAR pushed the button three times, and then twice, more slowly. Then he waited. In a few minutes the back door of Nicole's home slowly opened. Sigurd put out his head.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"There was a raid by the Gestapo in Laila's home."

Sigurd turned pale. "And they found—"

"No. We learned of it in time. I have it here. We managed to get it away."

"Thank God for that!" Sigurd said.

"I must get it inside."

"Here?"

"There is no other place. I was just stopped by a Nazi on the street, a policeman. I told him I was bringing champagne to Fru Larsen."

"Is it very heavy?"

"We can lift it together. Hurry."

"We'll bring it to the cellar. Then Fru Larsen must decide what is to be done."

They went to the rear of a small bicycle truck. Inside was a large bulky cloth-covered package. Together they lifted it and carried it down to the cellar of the house. Then Ivar uncovered it. It was a small portable printing press used by the underground in Stavanger to print the illegal Free Norwegian newspaper, Revenge.

The old servant hurried upstairs and rapped on Nicole's door. She told him to come in. He told her the story.

"This is serious," she said slowly. "It must not remain here. And yet we cannot dismantle it. Too many lives were lost bringing that press here from Sweden. I will think of something. Meanwhile keep it in the little room, and cover it and lock the door. It is better that Ivar does not remain. In the event it is discovered there is no need to implicate any more than is necessary. . . ."

Later, when Dichter was announced, she went downstairs. Dichter was pacing up and down rapidly, slashing a short riding crop against his boot.

"Good evening, Paul," she said, smiling.

He stood silent, his jaw muscles bunching.

"Nicole," he said harshly.

"What is the matter, Paul?"

"Nicole, it happened again. In Halleland—another raid. An entire garrison was kidnaped. The radio was destroyed. A factory was destroyed."

She turned to hide her face and picked up a cigarette. She lit it and then turned back to him.

"It happened early this morning," he said slowly. "Whoever gave the English the information gave them detailed instructions. They knew exactly where to go. That garrison was established there only one week ago."

"Yes, Paul," she said evenly, meeting his eyes.

"I told you a week ago about the establishment of that garrison. It was when I was away for two days making the necessary arrangements for it. Nicole, how did the British find out about this?"

SHE took a slow puff on her cigarette and breathed the smoke out before she answered. "Are you suggesting that I told them?" she said coldly. "I'm sure the English have an espionage in Norway."

He took her shoulders and shook them violently. "Don't use that cold tone of voice with me," he said. "Don't get superior with me. I won't stand for it."

"Paul, you are hurting me," she said quietly.

She twisted her shoulders out of his hands and looked calmly at him. "If you think I had anything to do with this, why don't you have me arrested?" she said.

She stood very tall and calm and looked him full in the face. He raised his hand and then lowered it slowly. He stood shaking for a moment. He was afraid of her, she knew, with a fear that was in its way stronger than her fear of him. He was afraid of her with the kind of fear that only a man in love with a woman can have, and when he knows she is stronger than he is, that his own strength is not strength but violence.

He turned and walked to the window and looked out. His left hand opened and closed convulsively and his right hand rapped the crop against his boot. He turned suddenly, his face tense.

"Nicole, listen to me. It is not just tonight. I would say nothing if it were just Halleland. But there was Flekkefjord. I told you about the barges at Kristiansand, and two nights later the barges were exploded. I told you about the munitions at Aalesund, and British bombers dropped bombs there three days later."

He wet his lips and stared at her.

"At first these things meant nothing to me because I would not believe what they could mean. I love you, Nicole, and I could not even think it could be you. But then the coincidence was too frequent. And now this underground paper, Revenge. You think I do not know of this, Nicole," he said raspingly. "When Colonel von Werra was taken away from Stavanger with poisoning from wine, there were very few of us who knew it. It was announced he was simply recalled. But I told you the truth, Nicole, and it was printed in that paper within a week. What have you to say to this?" he asked. His voice got quite low, pleading almost. He looked at her, his eyes no longer angry. "What have you got to say to this? Tell me!"

She studied his face and wondered how far the lie would go. She saw that his face was unhappy, wanting not to hear what he probably was certain was the truth. She stood silently, knowing that the verdict would not be so much in what she said as in what he wanted to believe, in what she could make him want to believe.

She walked slowly over to him and looked into his eyes. "Do you accuse me of poisoning Colonel von Werra?"

"No, Nicole, I did not say that. Don't put words into my mouth."

"Then you must admit," she said, "there are others who must have done this. There are others who must have known all these things you told me."

He looked at her for a moment, thinking of what she had said, finding it good, and he nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Yes, yes. That's right. There must be others. That's right."

"I have given no information to the enemy," she said.

"Nicole, Nicole," he said. "I love you so much."

He paused. "I would have to have you arrested." He pushed her away from him slowly and looked her full in the face. "Nicole, you would be shot. Do you understand what I am saying to you? You would be shot."

He walked away and sat down. "Nicole," he said, "for your protection, in the future I must tell you nothing. There must be no such other times, and to protect both of us I shall say nothing of military plans in the future."

"If you think that is best," she said.

"It is best," he said. "It is best for you not to have this dangerous information."

"Whatever you say, Paul."

She looked at him and knew that he would have to be removed. For a moment a sudden quick wave of tenderness rode through her; she reached out instinctively and touched his shoulder. He looked up. His face was haggard. He twisted slightly in his seat and the light fell on the shiny swastika on his uniform. She drew back and lifted her head. . . .

Later the other officers came and Dichter got quite drunk. Nicole was gay and vivacious; she moved quickly from officer to officer, exchanging quips, flirting, laughing. She joined in their songs. Dichter's eyes followed every move.

She sat down next to him and sipped a glass of sherry. "Paul," she said, "I have a little favor to ask of you."

"Anything," he said. "Anything."

"I have a package of iron kitchenware that I wish to give to the sister of my servant Sigurd. It is impossible to get transportation of that kind these days. Would it be possible for you to arrange to have it moved for me?"

"Certainly," Dichter said, beaming. "You know that it is easy enough for me to arrange these things. . . ."

IN the morning she got up early and, with Sigurd, got the press into a large carton and bound it. The servant was dry-lipped with fear.

"This is so dangerous," he said.

"It is the least dangerous way," she said. "These Nazis have no sense. They would never discover a thing like this. Their minds go along routine channels, and this will be all right."

"I hope so."

"Attack, Sigurd," she smiled. "Attack. It is always the better way."

Presently a German military truck came into the back yard, and three soldiers climbed down. One knocked on the door.

"Fru Larsen," he said respectfully, "Captain Dichter said there is something here we should move for you."

"It is very heavy," she said.

"We are strong, Fru Larsen," the soldier said, smiling.

"Sigurd," Nicole said, "you had better ride with them and show them where to take it."

Sigurd nodded. "Yes, madame," he said.

"I shall be home all morning. As soon as it is delivered safely, return and tell me."

"Yes, madame."

"Perhaps you boys would like a little drink of our Norwegian schnapps." The soldiers looked at each other and grinned. "Come," she said. "One drink each. It will give you even more strength."

She brought them into the house and gave them the liquor. They thanked her and returned to the truck. Then they drove off. Sigurd sat, holding to the carton.

Nicole went back to her bedroom and stretched herself on a chaise longue. She turned her head and looked out of the window. It was still early morning. The sun was strong and it would be a warm day. She looked at the sunlight and remembered how she used to wake up when she was a child and see the sun and how good the sight of it would make her.

She lit a cigarette and then she remembered how barbaric her mother used to think smoking before break-

fast was, how she used to raise her eyebrows and throw up her hands when Nicole lit a cigarette in bed. They were a strange pair, her mother and father. Her father always used to call her Nick. Not Nicki, as most of her friends did, but Nick, and she thought how no one had ever called her that except her father, until Alan, and how she felt when Alan called her that, it sounded so right.

She remembered the years with Hans Larsen and how quickly they disappeared. They seemed no part of her life. And that was the strangest of all, because this house was Hans Larsen's house and the things in it were Hans Larsen's things. Larsen, she remembered, was very kind. Marrying him seemed the easiest thing after her mother died, but nothing much was ever between them. She always wanted to cry a little when she thought of Alan. She remembered telling him about Larsen and how Larsen was on the other side; how Larsen thought Norway should have its own Hitler too, and how Alan had told her that there could never be anything real between Larsen and herself.

SHE had seen Alan just once after Budapest; yes, she remembered, in Paris, when she was sitting with Larsen at a street table at the Café de la Paix and Alan had walked by, and she could feel at this moment, in her room, what she felt at the sight of him. She remembered she was drinking a brandy when she saw his tall figure, his stooped shoulders—he was so damned round-shouldered and careless-walking—his brown tweed suit, as he walked by, close enough for her to touch him, and the drink drowned in her throat. She wanted just to call out, to say, Alan, my dearest darling, Alan, hello, but she didn't and he turned down the Avenue de l'Opéra, not watching as he crossed the street, and then he disappeared in the crowd.

And now it was something to know that she really was not alone fighting the dragons. It was something to be able to tell herself during the bad times that she was sending her messages to him, that her messages were the kind of love letters they had to have, that was the kind of people they were, and that was what was allotted to them. And when her work was successful, and she heard of the results, then those were his answers to her. She knew that he only did as many of the jobs as one person could do, but still all the jobs were his jobs, because all the messages were to him.

After a while she heard the sound of an automobile and she went to the window overlooking the front of the house. She saw the German truck pull up, and then Sigurd climbed down. She saw one of the soldiers salute him, and then she went downstairs to meet Sigurd.

"It worked perfectly," he said as he entered the house.

She smiled and nodded wearily. Then she said, "Sigurd, Paul knows. He knows definitely."

Sigurd's eyes widened.

"There was quite a scene last night," she went on. "I swore that it was untrue and he pretended to believe me because he is afraid not to believe me, but he knows."

"What are you going to do?"

"And he also said that he must stop giving away Nazi information, for my own protection. So he now is useless anyway," she said.

"What are you going to do?" he repeated.

"We are safe for a little while, Sigurd. He will do nothing now. He loves me too much. But the work must stop."

"I understand, madame."

"Captain Dichter must be put to death, Sigurd," she said tonelessly.

Sigurd nodded his head gravely. "I would have said so, Fru Larsen," he said softly, "only I could not."

"How shall we arrange it, Sigurd?"

"The death of one Nazi is not difficult to arrange. There are many here who would deem it a privilege to receive the assignment."

"No, Sigurd, it must not be done from here. There will be an investigation and many will be questioned. I'm afraid some of them might be tortured into talking—if they knew who did it. It must be done from the outside. I must ask them in Britain to send me an executioner."

Sigurd thought silently for a moment. "We could get the message out from the hills tonight in the usual way."

Nicole shook her head. "No, even that is too dangerous now. We must use the slower way. We will do it on the spectacles. We will use Anders."

"I'll leave immediately."

"Hurry, Sigurd. There is no time to lose."

Sigurd walked rapidly down a side street until he came to a tobacconist's shop. He entered and asked for a package of cigarettes and then he nodded imperceptibly to the man behind the counter. Sigurd walked through the shop and through a small door into a room in the rear. A moment later the tobacconist Ingebrecht appeared, a tiny old man with a seamed face that seemed too small for the thick glasses he wore.

"What is to be this day?" he asked.

"A short message. One to be used with spectacles."

Ingebrecht took out his pens and a small bottle of colorless liquid. Sigurd wrote in code the message Nicole had given him, and handed the coded paper to Ingebrecht. The old man studied it for a moment, and then he took a small sheet of paper, so thin it was as transparent as glass. He cut off a piece about the size of a postage stamp and slipped the cut-off piece under a wooden stand bearing a magnifying glass. He dipped his pen into the colorless liquid and then scratched the pen point on the paper. When he was finished and the liquid had dried, there was no mark on the paper at all. He rose and held the paper up to the light. He looked at it carefully.

Satisfied, he went to a small box and took out a pair of spectacles. He spread a thin mucilage on one of the glasses and then spread the paper on it. He pressed it down hard and wiped it and then breathed on it. Then he held up the glasses and scrutinized them carefully. The paper was not visible on the glass.

"It is finished," he said. He put the glasses in the case and handed them to Sigurd.

When Sigurd returned to the house, Anders was already there. Anders was a vendor of odds and ends for housewives. Sigurd gave Nicole the spectacles and she looked at them and then handed them to Anders.

"Bring this to Brit in Kristiansand," she said. "He will know what to do with it."

Anders nodded. "I think I could use new glasses," he said. "I see better with these than with my own."

"Go with God," Nicole said.

"Thank you, Fru Larsen," the old vendor said. He lifted his sacks on his shoulders.

"It is better to go the slowest way if that is safer," Nicole said. "Speed is important, but safety this time is more important than anything."

Anders nodded again and left. As he walked from the house a long gray Mercedes pulled up and Dichter stepped out. Anders touched his hat to the Nazi officer and kept walking.

"Hello, Nicole," Dichter said. "Did you buy something?"

"Just some thread," she said. "We must try to keep our dresses as long as possible these days."

"I will buy you ten dresses," Dichter said, kissing her.

"GOOD evening, lieutenant," the major said as Alan entered.

"Good evening, sir." Alan saluted.

"Lieutenant, for several weeks we have been preparing an assault on Stavanger. Our preparations are now about complete. But today we received a rather disturbing message from our agent there."

Alan looked up sharply. Stavanger was Nick.

"As you and a very few others of us know," the major continued, "our agent in Stavanger directing espionage is a Norwegian woman, a Nicole Larsen."

"Has anything happened to her, sir?"

"Not yet, but this woman maintains a sort of cabaret in her home, for German officers. She has obtained a good deal of her information from one Nazi officer in particular, but now it seems that he has grown suspicious of her, and she feels in serious danger. The swine is rather painfully in love with her, as I understand it, and probably won't do anything immediately. But her hands are tied

as far as sending out information until he is removed from the picture."

"Yes, sir," Alan said. He filled his pipe slowly and lit it.

"She requests that we send over a man to execute this Nazi."

"Yes, sir."

"You know the men perhaps closer than I do, lieutenant. That is why I have called you. I think it would be good to send the man over at the time of the attack. In the confusion, he could lose himself in the city and get to her home. Whom would you suggest?"

"Myself."

Major Wallace shook his head. "That is out of the question."

"Why, sir?"

"It is not an assignment for an officer who has the training you have. Your loss would be too great. I want an enlisted man."

"I ask it as a personal favor, Major Wallace."

The major shook his head again.

"If I may be permitted to say so, sir," Alan said, "it doesn't quite work out that way. I have been in a couple of wars now and I know it doesn't work out that way. The risk doesn't matter. It never matters where you are or what you are doing. I believe that."

"I suppose you are right, Lowell," the major said finally. "I know you want to run this little errand. I would like to do it myself. All right, lieutenant, go ahead with it."

"Thank you, sir."

"You understand what civilian clothing means. You will be accounted a spy if you are captured."

"Yes, sir."

"It probably would be better," the major said slowly, "not to be taken alive."

They stood up and he held out his hand. "The word for you," he said, "will be Quisling."

"Quisling?" Alan laughed.

"Yes. Good luck and God bless you. Come back if you can."

"I will, sir."

THE attack was made with detailed timing. First, long-range Hampden bombers laid down a heavy smoke screen to cover the landing of the troops, and other Hampdens bombed the airdrome to prevent German air support from taking off. Bombers were conducting similar airport destruction on other nearby fields from which the enemy could rally planes to the attack, and at the same time the destroyers opened a deadly barrage with their heavy guns on the port itself. Then the Commandos raced into the city.

Each platoon knew its task. They invaded ships moored to the piers, raced to factories, oil tanks, ammunition dumps, a wireless station, a quisling industrial plant. They stormed the main hotels, blasting Nazis in the lobbies and following them up to the rooftops.

Crazily, through the dull roar of the exploding buildings, through the sharp brittle fire of the machine guns, through the heavy ping of the rifles, there came the sound of bagpipes. With the thin skirling wail piercing the air, Nazis turned back slowly and moved into the hills. . . .

Alan's boat grounded itself on the shore outside the city and the platoon scrambled up the embankment and started on its assignment. They reached the curving road leading into the city, and then, coming at them, they saw a score of Nazi soldiers.

Both sides opened fire simultaneously. The Commandos had the advantage. The fires in the city made the Nazis visible in the night. The raiders were less visible against their own black background of forest.

Alan ran toward the woods, dropping on his face, rising, and then running again, and then he felt a hot iron lay itself against his right thigh and he stumbled.

He put his hand on his leg. It was wet. He got up and started to run again, but his leg doubled under him. He fell on his face. This was it, he thought. He always had wondered how it would be and here it was. He twisted and tried to roll from the road and then he felt himself lifted. He looked up. It was the Pole. He was swung across the big man's shoulders and the Pole started to run for the shelter of the trees.

"Put me down," Alan said.

The Pole laughed.

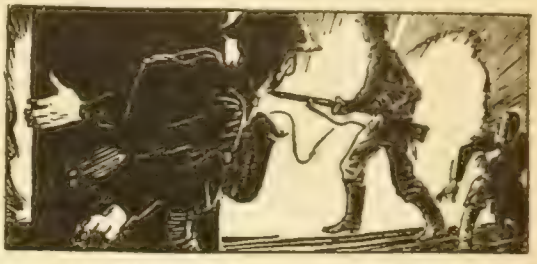
"Put me down. I order you to put me down."

"Yes," the Pole said. He held Alan in one hand and directed the fire of his machine gun with the other. Then he jerked suddenly and Alan felt something wet under his hand.

"You're wounded," he said. "For God's sake put me down and get to cover."

The Pole nodded and grinned. "Not hurt," he said, shaking his head, "not hurt," still shaking his head and grinning, and then his knees buckled under him and he slipped slowly to the ground.

Alan shook the Pole and the big man opened his eyes



and tried for that grin again, and then he closed his eyes.

Alan reached into the Pole's holster and took out his revolver and fired a shot at the Nazi soldiers. He fired twice more and then the Nazis started to move back under the superior fire of the machine guns. Alan lay behind the Pole's body and felt it recoil again under another bullet. Then he threw himself backward into the low brambles on the inland side of the road and felt himself rolling slowly down an incline. He rolled for fifteen feet, holding on to the revolver, and then he stopped.

He dragged himself from tree to tree away from the road. His leg was hurting like hell now. He held his hand over the wound to stop the blood from leaving a trail. He came to a tree with a low branch. He slipped the pistol into his pocket and pulled himself into the tree. He couldn't make the wounded leg lift itself. He reached down and took the ankle and lifted the leg into the tree. Then he hauled himself onto a higher branch.

He felt himself getting faint. He rubbed his leg. There was no feeling in it. He ripped open his trouser and felt the flesh in the dark. He could feel a small hole in the soft part of the thigh. He felt around the other side. The flesh was unbroken there. The bullet was still inside. He opened his flask and took a drink. He lifted his shirt out of his trousers and ripped off strips of his underwear. He tied one strip carefully around his thigh, just above the wound. He looked upward. Through the trees he could see the red flare from Stavanger. The planes were still droning in the sky and he could still hear the guns.

He was growing faint and he settled himself as securely as he could in the juncture of the branch and the tree. He opened his belt buckle and drew his belt out of his trousers. He drew it under the branch and around his two thighs and pulled it as high to his belly as the length of the belt would allow. Then he tightened it.

He leaned back against the tree. He had to decide what to do to keep his mind from going away. Then he felt rain on his forehead and he lifted his head and tried to get some of the rain in his mouth, and then he got loose and fell back heavily against the tree trunk. . . .

The rain brought him around. He woke quietly and was awake for a few minutes not knowing where he was, and then his mind came back to him. He sat up a little higher and eased the tightness of the belt around his thighs. He looked around. It was dark and quiet. He felt for the bandage over his wound. The blood had come through and had crusted, but it didn't feel as though it were still bleeding. He closed his eyes again. He would have to decide what to do and decide quickly. He would get weaker as the hours passed, and if he waited too long he might not be able to do anything.

He loosened the belt and moved his leg back and forth.

The motion hurt. He tried to hold the leg so that the rain would fall on the wound and soak through, but he could not get it into the right position.

He took a long drink from the flask and felt himself getting a little stronger. When there had been no sound around him for a long time he thought he might risk lighting his pipe. He filled it halfway up, sheltered the match carefully, pulled the smoke in.

I must keep my head, he thought, as the pipe and the whisky restored him. Now especially, he thought, with Nicole so near, nothing must happen. He couldn't be taken now, and if he were taken he would have to get away and get to her. Then the pain came back all through his body and he dug his hands into his thigh. . . .

When he opened his eyes again it was daylight. He unwound the bandage carefully. The wound was puffed up and black around the edges and a deep redness extended in a huge circular field around the black. Inside the wound itself the flesh was wrinkled and gray.

He sat up in his perch and listened. There was no sound anywhere. The rain had stopped and the sun was shining. He swung his arms back and forth to restore circulation. When he felt he could trust his arms he slipped over and grasped the branch and lowered himself. His feet doubled under him when finally he let go and reached the ground, and he fell on his face.

He lay on the ground, still wet from the morning, until the weakness passed, and then he took a small drink. He sat up presently and began to massage the unwounded leg. When the circulation seemed normal there, he rubbed the other leg below the knee.

The sun was getting warmer and he stopped shivering. He tried to think what he had to do. His lips were hot and dry and he felt weak and hungry. He wondered if he would be any good for the job the way he was. It would be wrong to go back to the coast and try to contact the underground and get back to Scotland. That would only endanger other lives. . . .

Still, if he held out he might get there. He knew the leg had become infected and before long gangrene would spread so much he wouldn't be able to do anything, but it was still possible for him to get to Nick's and do the job before that happened. Then they could have him and do what they damn well pleased with him.

He looked at his map and figured out where he must be, and then he started to move in a great circle to come into the city in the right place. He had to walk slowly, resting against as many trees as he could, stopping often to sit down when he got too weak to go on.

He kept walking until the sun was high. He came to a country road and looked at the map again and verified his location. He broke off a dead branch and began to follow the road.

He was very hungry now. He realized he must have lost a great deal of blood and he began to get dizzy. He wondered where he could get something to eat. When he passed a certain point, he knew, his mind would start to move away and he would be lost.

The country road crossed a larger, paved road. It was a good hard road and he would be able to hear an automobile or patrol. After a while he heard the sound of an automobile and he hurried off the road and lay down in the forest.

Then he must have dozed. When he woke it was afternoon. He dragged himself up on the branch and started to walk again. His throat was powdery and his eyes burned. The road seemed to shake in front of him. After walking a little while he heard the sound of a stream and he followed the sound until he came to the water. He fell on his face and buried his head in it. It was ice-cold and wonderfully wet in his throat.

The water seemed to make him stronger. He got up and started to walk again. He walked slowly and the sun went down and it got cool and it was evening.

When it became dark he went off the road and into the woods. It didn't matter much now and he didn't bother to look for a tree to climb. He felt a great weariness coming over him and he didn't care any more. He knew what this meant, what this was the start of, but he couldn't help it, he didn't care. He lay down in the grass and thought he would just lie there and die.

He was afraid now to be captured. He was afraid of himself, of what he might be made to say. The way he was now they might be able to make him say anything. They had ways. He always had told himself he would be able to resist anything, but that was when he was all himself. He was drifting now and God himself only knew what they might make him say.

He took out the revolver and put it to his head and tried to get himself to pull the trigger. Nick, he said, you'd understand this. It *is* an easy way out, but I'm not doing it entirely for myself. Nick, he said, you'd understand in a minute. Then he said, Pull the trigger. Pull it and get it over with. Just one little squeeze, little man, and then see what happens.

He held the gun there for a few moments and then he felt the strength running out of his body and the gun was heavy and it slipped down and he felt the ground soft and wet under his face.

It was daylight again when he awoke and he saw the sun was way over. His mind was going way away fast now, and then he heard heavy steps, the very heavy steps of German soldiers.

He looked down the road and saw two Nazi soldiers walking toward him. He watched them for a moment and then he grinned, and suddenly he was one again. He reached into his pocket and took out the pistol.

He felt beautifully cool again and sure. He tested the action of the gun. He would wait until they were so near he couldn't miss them. He would take a couple more along with him. How many did that make that he knew? Ten or eleven? Not enough.

He waited a few moments more and then the Germans were just fifteen feet away. He couldn't miss now, he thought. Just stay with me for another few seconds, mind, and it won't be wasted; and he lifted the gun and laughed out loud and pulled the trigger. He saw the surprise that spread over the face of that one and the red stain that spread over his chest, and felt the shock of the recoil—mind, stay with me for just a second more—and he pointed the gun at the other Nazi, only the gun kept dropping—please, please, please, please—but the gun kept dropping and the earth slapped him in the face.

THE night had been very short and it would not have seemed possible, but when it got light, the warm sudden light of the spring morning in Sörland, the latest issue of Revenge, telling in detail of the Commando raid on the city, was on display everywhere in Stavanger.

The little single sheets were pasted on walls, tacked onto trees and posts, and pasted on store windows in the shape of Vs. They were slipped under doorways. They appeared in folded restaurant menus and fell out of napkins. Packages arriving from stores had them in the wrapping. They were pasted in telephone booths. They were set in chimneys and when fires were started, the rising air lifted them and spread them in the air and they floated down like square monstrous-sized snow.

Enraged Nazi officers opened the newly arrived copies of the Volkischer Beobachter, the Führer's own paper, and stuck on top of a long article proving that underground activities were now under control was Revenge. Captain Dichter received his copy in a confidential report placed on his desk. He lined up the frightened staff and threatened to execute them wholesale unless they told

him where the paper had come from. The petrified men swore, and truthfully so, that they didn't know.

The most audacious single achievement was in placing the copy for Colonel Kurt von Kunstlow, Nazi commandant of the Stavanger area. He found his copy of the issue waiting for him on top of the little pile of toilet paper in the private privy in his headquarters.

THE voices came first. Alan remembered, while he was still away, hearing the voices, hearing some one say in German you cannot kill these damned Americans, and he remembered thinking he must be really dead, and how terrible it was they were speaking German where he was dead. Then he opened his eyes and a glaring whiteness rushed upon them and he closed them again. He waited a little while and then he opened them again slowly and let the light in gradually. He tried to move his head. He could not. He moved his eyes as much as possible. He could see he was in a hospital room.

It seemed he was lying there for a long time when the doctor came in. The doctor took his temperature and pulse, moving with precision and speed.

"Where am I?" Alan asked.

"General Hospital, Stavanger," the doctor said curtly.

"Stavanger," Alan said. "Tell me, how long have I been here?"

"It is now the eleventh day."

"Eleven days!"

"Eleven days since the day you assassinated a German soldier."

"Just one of them?"

"It was fortunate for you that you fell unconscious after firing the first shot. The second soldier refrained from shooting you."

Eleven days, Alan thought. Almost two weeks, and Nick was waiting for him. He wondered if it were too late. It must not be too late.

"When do you think they will take me from here?"

"In a few days, perhaps."

"Where am I going?"

"That is not for me to say."

"Do you know?"

"I am a doctor. My work is only in the hospital."

Alan nodded.

"You will be questioned briefly today. I can tell you this much," the doctor said.

"Questioned?" Alan asked. It's starting, he thought.

"Merely a preliminary examination. It will be conducted in this room. I have refused permission to have you removed as yet."

"Who is going to question me?"

"One of the military officials."

The doctor looked at him, and then tossed a package of cigarettes on the table. "Keep these," he said.

He left the room and Alan leaned back in the bed and lit a cigarette. His strength was coming back fast now. There was always a way to escape. There was no place you couldn't get away from. It would be hard but it could be done. He was clear and sure of himself again, and if he watched carefully, surely there must be a time when he could get away. He blew out a mouthful of smoke and wondered whether it would be too late. He wondered if they had sent some one else.

The door to the room opened and a German officer walked in and then Nicole walked in behind him.

"I am Captain Paul Dichter of the German Army of Protection," the German officer said. "I have a few questions to ask of you."

Alan stared at the German. He was afraid to look at her. Then she walked to the side of the bed. "Are you in very great pain?" she asked.

"I do not ache," he said. He lifted his eyes to her face.

Dichter took her wrist and said, "Speak German." He turned to Alan. "Do you understand German?"

"Yes," Alan said. He had to pull his eyes from her face.

"Is he well enough for this?" Nicole asked Dichter. "Has the doctor granted permission? He still looks very weak to me."

"He is well enough," Dichter said. "I am informed he has the constitution of a horse."

Alan lit a cigarette and held it out to Nicole. "Would you like a cigarette?" he asked.

"Thank you," she said. She put it between her lips and squeezed them on it.

"What is it that you wish me to tell you?" Alan asked Dichter.

"I will conduct the questioning," the German said severely. "You are an American?"

"Yes, I am an American. I come from Maine."

"Maine?"

"Yes, it is a state in the northeastern part of the United States."

"You are a member of the British Commando troops."

"It is a particularly beautiful state in spring. The seasons have great contrasts in Maine and in the spring the trees become quite green."

"I am not interested in the color scheme of your native state," Dichter said. "It is unnecessary for you to pretend you are not a member of the British Army, stationed at a raiding base on the other side of the North Sea."

"Why question me, then?" Alan asked. He wondered if he could turn his eyes for a moment and look at her.

"There is a great deal you can tell us. It will go well with you if you are co-operative. We are not ungenerous."

"What can I tell you?"

"What is your profession?"

"I have no profession."

"What did you do before the war?"

"Nothing very much."

"You must have done something," Dichter said. "Please do not make me irritated."

"I do not wish to make the captain irritated."

"What, then, did you do?"

"I just traveled."

"No one just travels. What was your work?"

"Sometimes I worked as a newspaper correspondent."

"Ah," Dichter said exultantly. "You see, my dear, if we persist long enough with these louts we find what we want to know." He smiled at Nicole.

"What is your name?" he asked Alan.

Alan said nothing.

"How large is the Commando garrison from which you came?"

He said nothing.

"It will do you no good to deny anything or to withhold anything. We have methods of finding out everything we wish to know."

THE doctor entered the room. "I am afraid, Captain Dichter, that I must now request you to permit the patient to rest."

Dichter looked icily at Alan. "How soon, doctor, will this man be strong enough for removal to headquarters for a complete questioning?"

"In less than a week."

Dichter nodded. He smiled at Alan. "I shall see you again then," he said. "Come, my dear."

"Good-by," Nicole said to Alan.

"Good-by." He still could not look at her. "Smell some of the air for me when you get outside. It seems a long time since I have smelled air without ether in it."

"I will smell some of the air for you," she said, looking at him as long as she could.

It was only when he knew her back was turned that Alan lifted his eyes and looked at her. . . .

He lay for a long while in the bed and tried to remember everything that was said. He tried to remember each word; he tried to think if there was anything that was said that might endanger her.

He wondered why she had come, and then he thought, That must be the baby. That must be the Nazi baby. Then he thought how the Nazi had spoken to her, how damned familiar he was with her. These things probably were all figured out in advance, he thought, and probably there was a reason. . . .

The next day he was taken for his first walk in the hospital courtyard. The air was fresh and good after the

hospital. He walked for an hour. The following day he walked twice. His leg felt fine.

On the third day two soldiers took him to the rear entrance of the hospital and put him into an automobile. The car moved rapidly through the city, stopping finally at a stone building. They led him into the building, and then to a small room with a door at one end. They opened the door and ordered him to walk down a flight of narrow stairs to a small cell. There was a white iron bed in one corner but no other furniture. He walked over to the bed and sat down.

It was very quiet. In a few minutes the damp air made him shiver. He got up and walked. He ought to do a lot of walking, he thought. He ought to strengthen his leg as much as he could. There might be a chance, some way, and the leg had to support him.

He walked back and forth in the cell until the chill left him. He realized he was hungry. He walked to the iron door and yelled. There was no answer. He called out again and then started to kick on the door. He forgot and kicked with his right leg. He broke into a sweat with the pain. Then he heard footsteps and then a little square window in the door was opened and through it he saw the face of an old man.

"Hungry," Alan said.

"Yes," the man said.

He shut the little window and his footsteps died away. Later he returned, opened it again and slipped a bowl through. His face stared at Alan for a few minutes. It was a wrinkled face with a drooping white mustache and white hair and rheumy eyes.

Alan looked into the bowl. It contained a thick dark mixture, some kind of porridge. In it was a piece of bread, hard as stone. There was no spoon. He scooped up some of the porridge with the bread. The porridge tasted like sawdust. He finished it, and by that time the bread was soaked through and soft enough to eat. He lay down on the bed.

WHEN he woke he had the feeling it was in the middle of the night. After a while he heard footsteps, and then the little window was opened again and a voice said, "Return the bowl and I will give you food."

He handed back the bowl and received another one. It was gruel again, and he thought, This must be morning. He was left alone for hours, and then the window was opened again and he was handed another bowl.

"What are they going to do with me?" he asked in German.

The man said nothing.

"Why don't they question me and get it over with?"

The face was blank. The man shut the little window and walked away.

Alan sat down. This was part of the process. They were softening him up. He might be left this way for days. He knew of men who went crazy after a stretch of this and then told everything they knew. . . .

He slept for a long time and was awakened by the opening of the little window. He jumped to his feet. He rushed to the door. It was the old man again.

"Is it today?" he asked in German.

The old man stared at him.

"Take the bowl," the old man said in English.

"You're not a Heinie," Alan said. "You're Norwegian."

"Here is your food."

"What am I doing in here when there are Nazi-loving quislings like you?"

The old man said nothing. Alan took the bowl. "You damned quisling!" he shouted. "Quisling! Quisling!"

Then he stopped suddenly and put his hand to his head. It was happening. It was happening just the way they wanted it to happen. It was happening and it had not to happen.

He walked rapidly up and down the cell. He kept saying, I mustn't let go, I mustn't let go, I mustn't let go. He said, Let me die before I let go.

He sat down on the cot and wondered about killing himself. He knew he would not kill himself, but it was something to think about. It was something he could hold over his head. The laces had been taken from his shoes. The belt had been taken out of his trousers. Anyway, even if he had something to hang himself with there was nothing to hang from. He never got a spoon or a fork with his food. He supposed he could break the bowl and then cut his wrists with the broken edges.

He picked up the bowl and ate the stew rapidly. Then he lay back on the cot. He had to hold himself together. So thinking, he dropped off to sleep again, and slept deeply until awakened once more by the old Norwegian with the bowl. When he awoke this time, he knew there was nothing to fear. They were a little late now. They had missed out by maybe one day. It's all right now, he said, speaking to her. It's quite all right. It could come tomorrow. It could be next week or next year. But it was too late. There had been a chance, but now it was too late and they never could get at it any more.

IT was early morning when the old man from the prison came to the back door of Nicole's house. He came inside and told her, blinking his eyes, shuffling his feet unhappily. And Nicole leaned against a table and held tightly to its edge and the knuckles of her hands were white.

"I could not risk leaving before now," the prison keeper said.

"How long has he been there?" Nicole asked.

"Several days," the old man said miserably.

"And when will they start to question him?"

"It is to be today."

"How does he look?" she asked. "Is he still thin and weak? Will he be able to stand the questioning?"

"He is a strong man. I do not think he will break down."

"When would it be possible to arrange for his escape?" Sigurd asked.

"The night after tomorrow night is the first possible chance," he replied. "On that night there is a shifting of the prison guard and there are fewer sentries on than usual."

"The night after tomorrow night," Nicole said. "Two days. And until then? What will they do with him until then?"

The old man rubbed his drooping mustache and smiled wistfully. "He must not be too weak," he said. "He constantly berates me for serving the enemy. I find in that a sign that his spirit is not broken."

"When you see him again, tell him who you are," Nicole said. "Tell him that we are arranging for his escape, that he will be brought here."

"Yes, Fru Larsen."

"Tell him then," she said, "I am waiting for him here."

ALAN finished with his food and put the bowl on the floor. He sat down on the bed. This would probably be the day, he thought.

And so, when the tramping feet came along and the key grated in the lock and the door was opened and the guard stood there, straight and stiff and Nazi, he grinned and thought, well, he had not been mistaken.

"Prisoner," said one of the guards.

Alan nodded.

"You are to follow me."

They walked down the corridor and up a short flight of stairs, crossed an open yard and arrived at a small building and entered it. "Tell Captain Dichter the prisoner is here," the guard said.

He was led into a large office. Dichter stood erect before a desk.

"You speak German, I remember," he said.

Alan nodded.

"Sit down," Dichter went on. "We have a certain military relationship, but there is no reason why we cannot remain gentlemen, no?"

Alan sat down in a chair.

"Have a cigarette," Dichter said.

Alan reached out and took a cigarette. They were always giving him cigarettes. Must be Rule Number One in the book. He lit it and dragged the smoke deeply into his lungs.

"We must get to business," Dichter said, still smiling pleasantly. He thought how much he would have liked it if Nicole could be listening in to this. He felt calm and secure. "You possess certain information it is my duty to obtain from you. I ask you to give it to me willingly and save yourself any unpleasantness. You came from a base in Scotland, you said?"

"I did not say."

Dichter toyed with a short dagger. "Why not speak now," he said, "rather than afterward when, perhaps, you will have permanent physical injuries as a testament to pointless stubbornness? Why did you come here? How many men are there attached to your unit? Where do you obtain your information?"

Alan didn't say anything.

"I could help you," Dichter said.

"You know damned well I won't say anything," Alan said.

Dichter pressed the tip of the dagger into the soft part of his thumb. "I would rather you did not cause me to lose my patience," he said.

Alan mashed out the cigarette. "Let me make myself quite clear," he said quietly. "I have already abandoned life. I am quite prepared to die."

"To die," Dichter broke in quickly. "Certainly. Every soldier is prepared to die. But it was not of death I spoke when I said we have methods of finding out what we want to know."

"I know," Alan said. "I am prepared for that too."

"But why? You have fought the good fight and you have lost. Why not be a reasonable loser rather than the other kind?"

"There is only the other kind," Alan said. "One may not lose reasonably to a Nazi."

Dichter's face turned white. He leaned over.

"Why do you all fight so uselessly against the ocean of the new life?" he whispered. "National Socialism is the life of the future. Why not accept it?"

Alan lit another cigarette. "You may as well start what you intend to start," he said evenly. "I'm not going to say anything."

"Is that your last word?"

Alan breathed out a mouthful of smoke between his teeth.

Dichter looked at him for a moment and then his eyes went wild. He pushed a button and two of the guards entered the room. They took Alan from behind and his shirt was ripped from his back.

DICHTER said something rapidly in German. A tall man with a whip entered the room. "Begin," Dichter said. "Ten for the start."

Then the whip came down for the first time. Alan heard it before he felt it, heard it singing softly in the air, and then he felt it on his back, and then he heard it again and felt it again and he bit hard into his lips and thought, don't worry, Nick; and then the singing and the pain, and when was the numbness coming, and then the singing and the pain, and he thought, Nick, I'm taking it all right, Nick; and then the singing and the pain, and then the voice of the Nazi, "Are you ready to speak now?"

He fell flat on the floor, feeling the floor cool, his back in flames, his belly cool on the floor, his palms cool and flat on the floor, and Dichter's voice, saying, "Ten more," and then the singing and again and again and digging his nails into his belly to make it hurt there, and again and again and again and all the thought had to be there and all the hate had to be there and all the beliefs had to be there and again and again and finally again and the blackness didn't come. There was a somewhere in between but the blackness didn't come. . . .

When he opened his eyes he was pain. He was pain surrounding the getting back from the place between. He was flame pain around opening eyes and not knowing and then gradually knowing. He moved a little and he thought how good it would be to scream, only he wouldn't give them that.

He heard the sound of a key in the lock. He lifted his head, and when the flesh wrinkled on his neck it blazed with pain. The door opened and the old Norwegian prison keeper walked in.

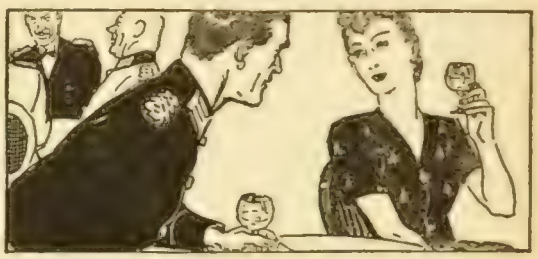
The old man shut the door carefully and walked over to the cot. "Are you in very great pain, my son?" he asked.

Alan lifted his head slowly again. "What the hell are you talking about?" he asked.

"I come from her." The old man walked to the door and looked out and then returned to the cot. "I have not much time to speak now. It would be dangerous to be found in here talking to you. I have just left her and it is arranged."

Alan searched the face of the old man. "What have I said to you?" he said.

"That was understandable," the old man said. "There is no time for that now. Please listen to me carefully." He reached into his pocket and took out a German revolver and a piece of paper. "Take these and hide them. The paper is a map of the city. When you get clear of the prison you will look at it. You will see that it leads



you to a crossroads. There will be an old man waiting for you there. He carries two large sacks across his shoulders. He will lead you to the house."

"I understand," Alan said. "But what of yourself? What will happen to you when they find I am gone?"

"That is arranged," the old man said. "You must strike me on the head with the base of your revolver. Just here—" He placed his fingers above the nape, a little to the right. "This place is the safest. Strike just in this place, and be careful not to strike too hard. It is an old head and it might crack easily."

"I can't hit you."

"It is nothing. Listen to me. When you leave this cell you walk rapidly to the right. That will lead you to the garden. Soon you will be beyond the prison. Walk straight ahead for five minutes and then look at the map. Here are matches. It is understood? Now strike."

The old man lowered his head.

"I can't," Alan said.

"This has been arranged to coincide with the shifting of the prison guard," the old man said. "There is no time to lose."

Alan reversed the revolver and lifted it. He held it there for a moment. "I can't," he said.

The old man straightened up. "Come," he said. "There is no time to lose. Listen. I lost a son in the invasion of Norway. Please permit me to return another son to the fight. After all, what is one blow on an old head if it helps Norway?"

He lowered his head again. "Strike," he said.

Alan brought the butt down sharply and then caught the old man in his arms. He held him tightly, holding the fragile small bones, and then he lowered him gently to the floor.

He walked quickly to the door. He hurried down the corridor and came out into the garden. It was dark. There were no stars, no moon. He felt his way quietly along the wall. Then, ahead of him, in the pale light of a hanging lantern, he saw a German guard.

He walked silently up to him. He pushed the revolver into his back and whispered quickly in German, "If there is a sound I shall shoot." The man stiffened.

Alan reached out and took the dagger the man wore

as part of his uniform and at the proper place he inserted the blade and pushed it up to its hilt and then threw his hand over the soldier's mouth. The Nazi fell noiselessly to the ground.

At the end of the paved street Alan struck a match and studied the map. Then he blew out the light and followed the directions and he soon was at the crossroads. There he saw a figure.

He walked up to the man. "Quisling," he whispered.

The man nodded and motioned with his hand. They walked for about ten minutes and came to a hill, and then to another street. They walked down this street and turned a corner. They stopped in front of a large house.

"To the rear," Anders said.

They went along the side of the house and then Alan entered a small door. She was standing inside.

"Hello, Nick," he said.

"Alan," she said, "Alan."

Sigurd closed the door quickly behind them. They stood there on the landing, looking at each other in the half-light from the cellar.

"Am I very late?" he asked.

"Not too late," she said.

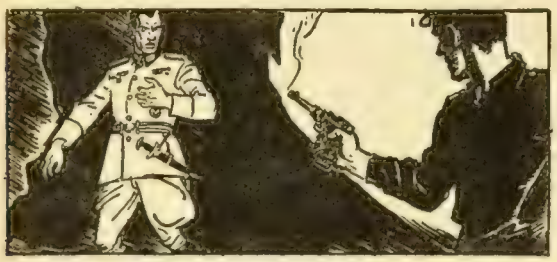
There was a noisy thumping above them. "My guests," she explained.

He looked at her, trying to make out her face. He had seen that face for months, but now he could hardly see it. He kissed her.

"Fru Larsen," Sigurd whispered from a distance.

"We are very old friends, Sigurd," she said. "We have not seen each other for a long time."

Sigurd turned on a light. The room held a bed and a



chair and a small table. "I will return upstairs," Sigurd said, "and see that everything goes all right."

He left the room and shut the door softly. They stood looking at each other. Then the noise upstairs grew louder.

"Nick," he said. He felt suddenly weak. He leaned against a wall.

"Could you hold me for a moment?" she asked. "There are so many things to decide, but could you hold me for a moment now?"

A faint shout of laughter drifted down.

"We can't have too much of this," she whispered. "We don't belong to ourselves now." She pushed away from him, shivering. "It's the same," she said. "But there are so many other things now."

"Nick, baby."

"I promised myself I wouldn't cry," she said, biting her lip. "I know what they did to you and I was going to be so strong for you."

There was a crash of glass from above.

"You must be very tired," she said. "Sit down, darling."

"I'm all right."

"Try to rest," she said. "I have some whisky here. I've been saving it for you."

"Is our friend upstairs?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"Nick," he said.

"Yes."

"Is he the one?"

"Yes."

"I thought so," he said. "It will be a pleasure."

"You must rest now. You must get strong again."

"I'll get strong again."

"I'm going upstairs now," she whispered. "Try to sleep." . . .

He was awakened by the noise above him and he sat up suddenly. He couldn't think where he was for a moment and he twisted his head around and wondered where the noise came from. Then he remembered and he lay down again and reached out for where Nick had left the cigarettes. He lit one and waited.

He felt for the bottle and had a drink. He heard footsteps and she opened the door. She was carrying a tray with two steaming bowls.

"You are a sensation, darling," she said.

"A lot of noise about the break?"

"Quite a lot of noise."

"What about the old man?"

"They brought him around and questioned him, but he lied beautifully."

"Ah," he said. "They don't suspect you, do they?"

"The only one who would ever suspect me would be Dichter. He sent an orderly to tell me he was supervising the search for you. I wished him luck. Now you must have some broth."

"I'm not hungry," he said, reaching out and touching her.

"You must have this first, darling," she said.

He finished half of the hot soup, and then she put down the bowl. "I can stay with you now," she said.

THE escape of the prisoner was bad enough for the entire Nazi garrison in Stavanger, but the blow fell hardest on Dichter, since the man was his prisoner and under his attention. One by one groups of searchers returned and reported failure, and then Dichter received word by telephone that Major Wilhelm Rieter was being flown from Oslo to investigate the escape.

Dichter had known that probably some one would be dispatched from Oslo to ask questions, but when he heard the name of Major Rieter he groaned. Rieter was a veteran of the other war, a man who openly showed his contempt for the political officers who now filled the German armies. He was a tough, uncompromising Prussian, and he spoke his mind openly. His skill as an officer protected him, but it was freely said that if he were more amenable to the National Socialistic way of things, he would have been a colonel, or even a general by now.

It was just before noon that the superior officer was announced.

Rieter was a thick heavy man with a Heidelberg scar on his cheek. "Captain," he said, without preliminaries, "what have you found?"

"Nothing, sir. There is no trace of the man."

"Dichter, you are a fool," Rieter said, seating himself in Dichter's chair. He put his feet on the desk, his muddy boots over Dichter's papers. "You're a bigger fool than I thought you were."

"I beg your pardon, sir," Dichter said, flushing hotly

"No man can disappear. Some one is hiding him."

"We have searched everywhere."

Rieter lit a cigarette. "The scum that politics have turned into officers of the German Army," he said slowly.

Dichter clenched his fists. "I cannot permit you to speak to me this way," he said. His face was burning.

"You will listen to me," Rieter said, spacing his words, "as long as I choose to speak to you. I am your superior officer and even in this kind of army you will take your orders from me. Is that clear, Captain Dichter?"

Dichter nodded. "Yes, sir," he said.

"If it is decided to remove me from my rank, that is another matter," Rieter went on. "Meanwhile it is I who will decide what you will listen to."

Dichter stood silent. Rieter looked at him and smiled. "Did you question the prison keeper?" he asked suddenly.

"We questioned him all night. He insists he knows nothing."

"I'm sure it must be true," Rieter said. "I know how you conduct your questioning. What do you know of this old man?"

"He is a man we have trusted."

Rieter raised his eyebrows. "Do you still trust anybody, captain?"

"He maintains that when he opened the window in the door to present the prisoner with his food the prisoner pointed a revolver at him, forced him to open the prison door, and then struck him over the head."

"And then, Captain Dichter, killed a German soldier and disappeared into the air?" Rieter continued with an amused smile.

"We have found no trace of him," Dichter said in a low voice.

Rieter lit another cigarette. He picked up his cap and put it on his head. "It will be necessary for me to report," he said, still smiling slightly, "that you are conducting affairs here in a most careless manner. The Stavanger area has the worst record of sabotage in the entire occupied area in Norway. I shall make the proper report, Captain Dichter."

"I have done the best that I can," Dichter said.

"Then you are a greater fool than even I think you are," Rieter said. "I shall return now to Oslo. Communicate with me directly if you find something out about the escaped prisoner."

"Yes, sir."

The major looked at Dichter carefully. Then he walked past him and left the office, not even bothering to return Dichter's salute.

RIETER worked rapidly when he returned to Oslo. That same afternoon Dichter received orders to report immediately to the Norwegian capital with a detailed account of the escape and an explanation of his responsibility in the matter.

Dichter read the telegraphed orders several times and then called the Sola airport and ordered a plane. Then he got up and poured himself a large glass of aquavit and drank it off rapidly. He rubbed his hands together. They were icy.

He took another drink and called for his car. He walked before a mirror and straightened his uniform. He stared at himself. The trim uniform seemed to bring him back a little and he straightened his shoulders and stroked his mustache.

He had a third drink, and then, getting into the car, he thought he wanted to see Nicole before he left for Oslo. He told the chauffeur to drive him to her house.

Sigurd opened the door and Dichter looked at him and wondered what he knew.

Nicole was sitting in the living room and she rose when Dichter entered.

He stared at her and she was a stranger. She was no longer a part of him. Every one was a stranger, he thought; he closed within himself and looked coldly at her.

"Hello, Paul," she said. He could almost hear the laughter, he thought. "Did you have any luck?"

"No," he said. He looked at her face and he felt himself going soft inside. "No," he repeated. "But we shall find him."

"You must be exhausted. Will you have some schnapps?" she asked.

He nodded. He watched her walk to the sideboard and pour out the drink. It seemed each gesture she made was detached, and he had the feeling that he had seen all this before. And it seemed to him too that he knew somewhere inside of him what was going to come next, and he tried to probe to find the answer, but it kept evading him.

She gave him the drink and he again felt a flutter of nervousness. He drank it off quickly. Then he sat down in a chair, and felt the drink warm inside of him.

"I've been ordered to report to Oslo," he said.

She sat down opposite him. He wanted to fall on his knees before her and hold her hand and tell her he was afraid, that he needed some one to help him. If only he could do that, but there was something in him which forbade that, and his face, which for a swift moment had become open and soft and wanting, tightened now until it was its usual face, his face.

"There was a major here from Oslo this morning," he said, making his voice ring hard and cold now. "He questioned me for a while. The swine. I'll take care of him."

"How long will you be away?" she asked.

"I don't know. Perhaps until tomorrow night. Perhaps another day."

He poured himself another drink. He was feeling the drinks now.

She asked him about the escape of the prisoner, and he told her what he knew, feeling somehow that she knew the details better than he did, and as he spoke his voice became harsher.

"Some one arranged for this whole thing," he said, standing up suddenly.

They looked at each other silently for a long time, and then Nicole rose slowly and asked, "Paul, you believe I had something to do with this?"

He kept his eyes against hers for a little while longer and then he lowered them. "I don't know," he said.

"Why don't you have me arrested?"

"Just say you had nothing to do with the escape."

"And how long will you believe that?"

"Nicole, stop torturing me!" he shouted suddenly. He breathed hard, looking at her. "I wish I could have you arrested. I wish I wasn't so twisted up with you. I wish I could stop loving you. Nicole, just tell me that you had nothing to do with this."

"I had nothing to do with this," she said.

"That's enough," he said swiftly, so swiftly as if to prevent her from recalling her words. "I believe you."

They said nothing for a full few minutes, and then he started to speak again, slowly, without looking at her directly. "My mind has been trained a certain way," he said. "It is impossible to change it. I can't help it, Nicole, but when I'm away from you, thinking as I have been trained to think, I find myself suspicious of what you may be doing. I keep telling myself that it cannot be true, but there is a part of my mind which insists it may very well be true." He stopped and wet his lips. "Then I see you, and I listen to you, and I look at you, and I know that these thoughts are mad."

She didn't say anything.

"Nicole," he went on. "I am going to return to Germany as soon as this investigation is cleared up and arrange for a divorce. Then you must marry me immediately."

She would not trust herself to answer him now. After a while he got up slowly.

"I have to go now. There is a plane waiting to take me to Oslo."

"Yes," she said. She walked up to him and put her hand on his arm. "I hope you will be cleared," she said.

He smiled. "They won't dare do a thing to me," he said, finding Dichter again. "I have too much prestige in the party ranks."

"I hope so."

"Don't worry. I may be only a captain in the army, but I am of much more consequence than that, I assure you." He was Dichter again, fine now, hard and rigid. He left, and she watched him get into the car.

THE next day Alan got up and limped back and forth a little. His leg hurt pretty badly but he could walk. Then, that night, Nicole got a call from Dichter, and he said he would be back the next day. He said he would get in late in the afternoon and go direct to his office and come to her house as soon afterward as he could.

Sigurd brought dinner down and Alan and Nicole ate quietly, just looking at each other. The noise seemed particularly loud that night. Each time there was a crash or a shout Nicole jumped nervously. He could feel her tension; he said nothing about it.

She went upstairs for a while, and then returned to him.

"How do you feel?" he asked her.

"Rotten. A little sick, I think."

"I know." He took a drink.

"Everything is arranged," she said. "One of our men has a post in the local Quisling administration. He has the use of an automobile. He will be waiting for you and take you to the railroad station. He will bring you

to a train. Some one will be inside the train waiting for you. He will ride with you and tell you where to get off. There is a boat ready to bring you out, and I will communicate with the British to have a submarine there."

"Sounds foolproof." He tightened his lips.

"This is our last night," she said.

He nodded.

"Alan," she said.

"Yes?"

"I'm so in love with you."

"Yes," he said. He closed his eyes and listened to her.

"Good-by, darling. Let this be it. Let me look at you."

"Such a lovely face," he said. "Such a lovely red-nosed face."

"Don't make fun of that face now," she said.

He lit a cigarette and gave it to her.

"Alan," she said.

"Yes."

"This may sound awful. Don't ever be afraid."

"No, darling."

"Outside, I mean. You must never be afraid."

"No."

"Of anything."

"I know."

"You must never be afraid of death," she said.

"I'm not."

"You must know this, Alan: If it should come time for you to die, you must know that soon after that, it will come time for me too."

"Nick, darling," he said. He felt strangled.

"I couldn't be alive without you," she said. "I'm not saying words. I couldn't be alive here without you. You must always know that."

And then she left quickly and he got up and took out his pistol and examined the action. It worked smoothly. He looked in the cartridge clip.

Then he went up into the house for the first time. She showed him where the living room was, and he studied the plan of the house, and then he returned to the cellar.

IN the evening Dichter arrived. He rushed up to Nicole and kissed her. His face was tired.

"It's all over," he said. When he saw her he stiffened and pushed out his chest against his uniform. He cracked his riding crop against his boot. His face got hard and sure in front of her.

"There is to be a new order here," he said, his voice metallic. "They told me I was too lenient. They told me I was too kind." He worked his lips. "I'll prove to them otherwise. It will seem as though it were a holiday here before."

She couldn't listen to him any more.

"Paul," she said.

"Yes," He stopped short.

"Paul, I must leave you for a few minutes." She looked at him. "Wait here for me."

"Where are you going?"

"There is something I must do. It will take only a few minutes." The words seemed to come out by themselves. "Wait here for me."

He smiled and for a moment his face was open, and she wanted to say something to him, but she couldn't, and she turned quickly and rushed out of the room. She hurried down the corridor and went into the cellar.

"He's upstairs," she said.

Alan got up and took out the pistol. "You better beat it," he said.

He watched the door shut behind her and then he sat down and waited.

When he figured it was time, he got up and started across the cellar, and after the first few steps his leg began to hurt, and by the time he reached the stairway, going up, the pain was like fire. He pulled himself up the stairs, each step a stab of pain, and holding tightly to the bannister he got to the top. He felt the sweat creep out on his face. He moved along the wall of the corridor, resting on the wall, hauling the leg after him.

He entered the room. Dichter stood with his back to him and he lifted his pistol and then he knew he could not shoot him in the back.

"Captain," he said, his eyes getting blurred with the pain, and Dichter turned around and said, "You!" And his hand went to his holster, and Alan wanted to tell him, tell him why, but he squeezed the trigger, and then Dichter said, "You," again, and then there was a slow stain on his chest and he looked at Alan for a moment and then he fell.

ALAN stared at the dead face for a moment, and then he got up and went out of the room. He limped down the corridor and in the back of the house the car was waiting. They went to the Sörland station, and he waited there a little while in the car and then the driver pointed to a freight.

"There is a boy inside named Ivar," he said.

"He is going with me?"

"A little farther than you," the man said.

Alan went to the open door of the freight and climbed inside, pulling his right leg inside with his hands. It was dark in the car. He heard a voice. "Over here."

He pulled himself over to the sound of the voice. He could feel his body starting to sweat again with the pain. The train began to move.

"Be careful," the voice said. "There is dynamite here."

Alan rested his cheek on the floor of the train. "Where do you go?" he asked.

"I stay with the train. I will tell you where to get off."

"With the train?"

He heard the boy move slightly. "There is a regiment of soldiers in the front of this train, returning from Petsamo. Before the train reaches Flekkefjord it passes through Troeddals Tunnel. The train is to be exploded in the center of the tunnel."

Alan did not say anything.

"The tunnel has also been mined from the outside," the voice said.

They lay silently for a while. Alan tried to ease his leg.

"You have time fuses?" he asked.

"No."

"Oh."

After a while the boy said, "Time fuses sometimes do not work at the exact moment. There must be no failure with this train."

They rode in silence, and then Alan said, "There will be no survivors on this train?"

"None," the boy said.

Then, after another long time, the train slowed up, and the boy told him it was the place.

"How do you Americans say?" he asked. "So long?"

"Yes," Alan said. "So long."

He slid open the door and dropped out. He fell on his face and rolled a little and then he stopped. He got up slowly. By this time the train had already reached the first of the series of tunnels. He watched the train disappear into the tunnel and then he turned and limped into the woods toward the sea.

THE END

NEXT WEEK

NO COFFIN FOR THE CORPSE

A Mystery Novel by Clayton Rawson

There were strange eerie happenings at the big house on Long Island Sound. A man was killed and a ghost walked. It was because of the ghost that the great magician, Merlini, was called in. But he stayed on to solve a series of baffling murders.

Abridged to a Reading Time of One Evening

TO THE LADIES

BY ALEXANDRA KROPOTKIN

FIRST to hang up Christmas stockings were girls in convents fifteen hundred years ago. . . . Our custom of giving Christmas presents began as an honor to St. Nicholas, patron saint of merchants and merchandise. Shrines are still dedicated to him aboard Greek ships. Nicholas became a bishop at the age of fourteen. He is said to have saved

a poor young lady from being sold into marriage by climbing a wall with a bag of gold for her while she was asleep. . . . According to Oriental legend, the Three Wise Men set fire to a well by throwing in a stone the infant Jesus had given them. Accredited site of their burning well is now in the Baku oil fields. . . These little known points about our greatest holiday were told to me recently by author Manuel Komroff, who writes many Christmas stories. "I trace my interest in religious subjects directly to my school principal, James Kieran," says Mr. Komroff. "Father of John Kieran, of Information Please, he read beautifully from the Bible and later was principal of Hunter College." . . . Unlike most of us in this nomad era, author Komroff lives today in the same city neighborhood where he was born and raised. "Dad ran a cigar store on the corner," he says. "Once a year it was my job to paint the wooden Indian." . . . Carved above the platform in his school auditorium were the words, *Know Ye the Truth and the Truth Shall Make You Free.* (John 8. 32.) It remains Manuel Komroff's favorite Bible line.

SHOPPING collision in the Christmas rush: Complete strangers, they bumped and their bundles went flying. After they'd picked things up, sorted things out, they laughed and parted. She thought he looked nice. He thought she looked delicious. At home they discovered mistakes in their sorting. He had a Christmas necktie she'd bought for an uncle, and she had a scarf bought by him for a cousin. For luck she wore his cousin's scarf; he wore her uncle's tie; and, sure enough, they met again on the street. This actually happened in Buffalo, New York. They've been going together a year now.

GADGET GIFTS will be more than ever welcome this Christmas. Here are practical suggestions: Good for brides, new swirl mixer to make gravy smooth or swish unshaken cocktails, 85 cents. . . . Soap with monogram straight through the cake, $1.50 for box of four. . . . Leather case for book matches, panel for snapshot, $1.50. . . . Long lasting gramophone needle, 4,000 records, $1.75. . . . Five chubby kitchen brushes on wooden rack, $1.95. . . . Giant baked-bean pot, gray with blue-horse decoration, holds enough for sixteen, $3.95. . . . New globe map with boundaries that can be changed as we win the war, $3.50. . . . For buffet parties, oak frame with three earthenware dishes that keep contents hot or cold for five hours, $13.75.

HOLLY and evergreens may be hard to get this year, due to transport difficulties. Create your own holly by spearing wire through cranberries. Use laurel for the leaves. Mix your imitation holly with bright red pomegranates and lady apples. Or tip pine cones with white paint and wire these to brown twigs along with clusters of shredded cellophane to simulate pine needles. Combine with large bowl of oranges. Make place mats of percale, red and white or blue and white, bordered with snowy white fringe. You'll have a gay Christmas table, inexpensive but festive.

CHRISTMAS is always *white* in the wilds of Maine, where Louise Dickinson Rich and her husband, Ralph, have been homesteading for seven years. Her new book, We Took to the Woods, will turn you green with envy if you've ever longed to live close to nature. (Published by the J. B. Lippincott Company; $2.75). . . . "We have our Christmas tree outdoors, for the benefit of the birds," she writes, "hanging suet and crusts on the branches." . . . You may want to follow one of her ideas for homemade Christmas gifts. She says: "I collect old-fashioned patchwork quilt patterns . . . to make pillow covers. In the old quilts each unit . . . 12 to 15 inches square . . . makes a good size for a pillow. They don't cost much, and I love the names of the old patterns—Star of Bethlehem, Wedding Ring, Flower Garden, Log Cabin."

ARMY and navy chaplains tell me they know from experience what Christmas songs are service favorites. Best liked by army men are Silent Night; Little Town of Bethlehem; Adeste Fideles. Navy preferences are Adeste Fideles; Watchman Tell Us of the Night; As with Gladness Men of Old; Silent Night; It Came Upon the Midnight Clear. . . . These are songs our boys will sing this Christmas Eve on battle fronts far from home. Join your voices with theirs!

CANDID CLOSE-UPS OF PICTUR

Coward, as Captain Kinross, and a handful of his men clinging to a raft, give three cheers for their ship as she goes under.

In a vivid and moving scene, Captain Kinross of the Torrin listens to the last message of a dying member of his crew.

At home, Chief Petty Officer Hardy and his wife and Seaman Shorty Blake and his sweetheart attend a community sing.

Of Tragedy and Glory:

IN WHICH WE SERVE

NOEL COWARD has made the first re great motion picture of this war. He producer, author, script writer, compo and star! In Which We Serve is an inspi feat of artistry, dignity, and endurance, far unique in screen history. The really s prising thing is not that Coward's talents sh in every department but that his picture entirely free from the flamboyancies and glo touches of "theater" which have hithe marked most of his writing and acting.

In Which We Serve is a magnificent job is also a deeply moving experience. It t the story of a destroyer, H. M. S. Torr from her birth, when her keel was laid 1938, to her death three years later in historic battle off Crete, when a bomb fina catches her amidships. Her captain (I Coward) and a few surviving officers and m swim to a rubber raft. As they cling to raked by enemy fire, their thoughts tu toward home. By means of flashbacks you to know these men—and in particular Ca tain Kinross, Seaman Shorty Blake, and Ch Petty Officer Hardy, whose lives are curiou bound by the fate of their womenfolk.

There is no room here for the brittle soph tication of Private Lives, and no time for t bonbon sentimentality of Cavalcade. With t exception of Coward's character (said to ha been suggested by Lord Louis Mountbatten the players all portray "little people," th simple courage and their high hopes. Wi honest humility and affection Coward pa eloquent tribute to the homespun heroi of the average man without ever soundi a false note. The thrills—and there are plen in the fights between ships and Nazi planes are authentic, the humor natural and nativ The tragedy is only a prelude to the glo

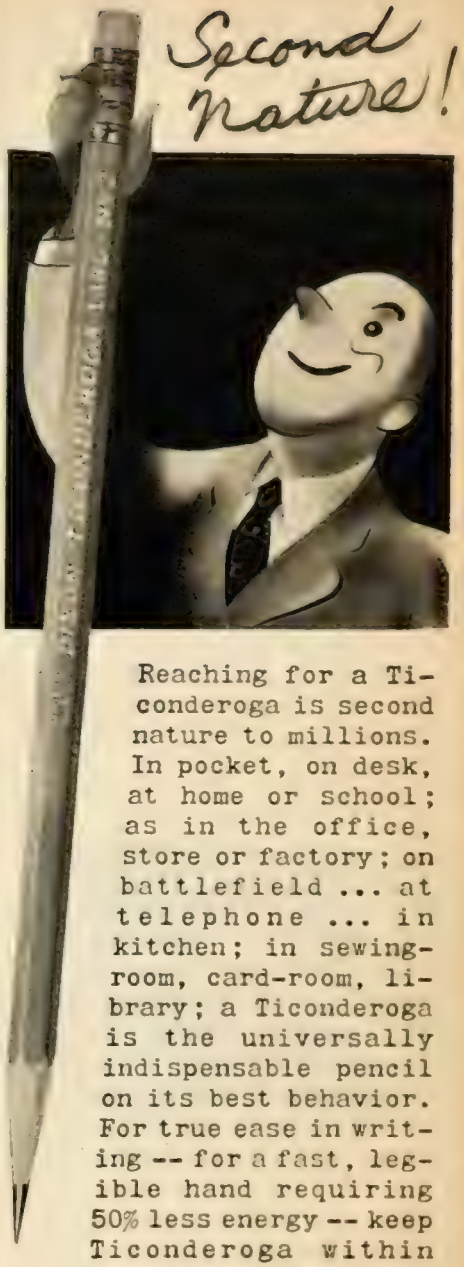
One of the memorable episodes is the To rin's part in the evacuation of Dunkirk. Wh the little handful of exhausted men disem barks on British soil, stiffen to attention, a march off in formation—you are watching great moment in motion pictures.

Mr. Coward's own performance is super His farewell to his men—the few who we rescued after the Torrin went down—is scene to be long remembered. Not far behi Coward are the other players. John Mills Shorty Blake and Kay Walsh as his swee heart, Bernard Miles as the C. P. O. and Joy Carey as his stanch wife, and Celia Johns as the captain's lady make a gallery of u forgettable portraits.

(Noel Coward Two Cities Production. R leased by United Artists.)

Noel Coward, actor—far from white tie and tails—gets some last-minute instructions before the cameras roll on a scene for In Which We Serve. Besides the huge water tank shown above, a full-scale destroyer was reconstructed in the studio.

Coward, director, producer, and composer of the music for In Which We Serve, was kept busy on the set. To critics who suggested that film production ought to be left to those trained for it, he replies, "See the picture and judge for yourselves!"



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THIS MAN'S WAR

CONDUCTED BY OLD SARGE

THE editor of Liberty said to me, "Sarge, this issue marks the end of the second full year of your page. Let's celebrate." Well, I couldn't believe it, but I figured it up and he was right! For two solid years, fifty-two issues a year, I've been whipping this page into some sort of shape, and I've never missed a week, come maneuvers or bunk fatigue. So I said, O. K. Celebrate how?" And he said, "Why not start off by letting Old Sarge write a letter to his readers instead of vice versa?" I sorta liked the idea, but I objected (for the umpteenth time), "That means I gotta have more space." "Take it," said ye ed. After they'd brought me to with ice water externally and snakebite antidote

Somewhere in Iceland: A package from home, just received!

you-know-where, I felt fine, and before the effect wears off here's that letter:

THINGS were a lot different two years ago. That was a year before Pearl Harbor. We had a peacetime Army then. There was a lot of grumbling about the Selective Service Act among the men who had to go, and a lot of parents were reviving that song of the first World War, I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier. Can you remember that far back? All of two years ago. Seems a lot longer, doesn't it? Me too. Now we can only give thanks to our leaders who saw the shape of things to come and gave us time to prepare to fight for the preservation of all those things we hold dear.

Running this page in Liberty I have, perhaps, seen the changes more sharply than you have. That's because of your thousands and thousands of letters, a cross section of America if there ever was one. Yes, I read every word of every letter that comes to me. I can't answer more than a few of them, personally or on this page, but every one is welcome and appreciated. You have written me from every post in this country, from our possessions, from the West Indies, from A. P. O.s that didn't exist a little while back: Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, England, Africa, India, Australia, Pacific islands, and all the other distant places where the new A. E. F. has gone. You have helped me and I have tried to help you. I hope I have.

Now, at the end of this second year, I want to thank you, men of the armed forces and your families and sweethearts all, for your letters, those I've had and those to come. Wherever you are, may God bless you and keep you. And a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from

Old Sarge.

P.S. Now we'll get back to *your* letters.

* * *

Here's another letter from Australia—a remote part of Australia, too. This country is like any other—it has its heavens and its hells, and we just happen to be doing our bit in the latter at the moment. It's hot, flies are bad and ants are worse, and the water is terrible. The nearest fair-sized town is (censored) days' travel away, and slow traveling, too. Beer is a novelty, but we have "Yankee" cigarettes and other imported commodities, so can do without the luxuries. All this means better days ahead and we're not complaining. We have our troubles and you have yours, but the Japs and the Germans are storing up the biggest bunch of trouble of all . . . and it won't be long now.

T/Sgt. J. D. H.,
Somewhere in Australia.

The lads in Australia can certainly put out swell letters—I wish I had space to print them all. If they can fight like they can write—and how they can and will!

* * *

We turn to you in our search for information on what seems to be a moot question even among our officers. Here it is. We are a group of limited service men (1-B). All of us are college graduates and many were successful professional men in civilian life. We believe that we offer good material for Officer Candidate School and we would welcome the opportunity. But because we are limited service men, have taken no basic training, and could not pass the required physical exams, we don't know where we stand. Have we any hope of qualifying as officers in any branch of the service?

Pfc. S. W. S., Fort Benning, Ga.

You certainly have. With but few exceptions, all administrative schools are open

On board a British destroyer: Making the Christmas pudding.

to limited service men, and in fact but few general service men will be considered for them. These are the officers' training schools for which you, as limited service men, are eligible: Army Air Forces Administrative, Army Administrative, Quartermaster, Medical Administrative, Finance, Adjutant General's, Military Police.

* * *

Will you do a favor not only for us but also for the hundreds of other men in the same boat? We are Uncle Sam's enlisted pilots and we worked pretty hard for our wings. Everywhere we go, people (G. I.s as well as civilians) look at us suspiciously and want to know how come we are wearing wings but no bars. We'd sure appreciate it if you could let the public know that the Army Air Forces do have enlisted pilots who are proud of their ratings.

Several Staff Sergeant Pilots,
Eglin Field, Fla.

Frankly, sergeants, I hadn't realized that the public wasn't fully aware of you and your status until your letter and several others of similar content arrived recently. As far as I'm concerned, no group of Army men rates more than you do. All of you had a lot of prior service in the ranks; you took the same pilot training as the cadets who got commissions, and you took it because you wanted to fly; you get much less pay than even flight officers; and you're all doing great jobs, whether in the ferry command or flying pursuit planes. That's how I feel about you.

P.S. Cheer up. All you enlisted pilots should soon be flight officers, under the new regulations.

* * *

Under the Service Men's Dependents Allowances Act of 1942, men

below the first three grades may apply for allotments for their wives *and* parents both. Are any provisions made for the dependents of a man in the first three grades other than his rental allowance? I was recently promoted to one of those grades, but I still have parents as well as a wife.

S/Sgt. C. M. R.,
Camp Forrest, Tenn.

The answer is no. I, for one, have never understood why Army personnel of the first three grades were excluded from the benefits of the act. The obvious answer is, of course, that the Pay Readjustment Act upped the pay of those grades to a point which made it unnecessary. But when you figure it out in dollars and cents, that answer doesn't stand up. Only Congress can change the law. Mebbe they will. I hope so.

* * *

Is it proper for a commissioned or noncommissioned officer to reprimand an N. C. O. publicly—that is, in front of other enlisted men? I made a simple mistake today and was trying to explain it to my top

In a California desert camp's P. O.: Sorting mail from home.

kick when he told me to "shut up" and added a few other uncomplimentary remarks in the hearing of the whole company. Are there Army Regulations covering such a case?

Sgt. C. S., Fort Benning, Ga.

There are no regulations in the sense of making such a public reprimand lawful or unlawful. F M 21-50, Military Courtesy and Discipline, says, "Corrections are made privately wherever practicable and are never personal or degrading in nature." Also, "Superiors are forbidden to injure those under their authority . . . by abusive language." Heaven forbid that any one should think I'm a guardhouse lawyer, so let me say now that top kicks are only human, their burdens are heavy and many, and you shouldn't have made the mistake in the first place and then made a bad matter worse by trying to explain it and thus wasting more of everybody's time. If I were you I'd forget the whole thing and pray that your top kick does too.

This department of Liberty is for the men of the armed forces of the United States: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, also their families and friends. The identity of letter writers will not be disclosed without their permission. Address your letters to: "Old Sarge," c/o Liberty, 205 East 42 St., New York.

RED SADIE AND THE RISING SUN—

Continued from Page 15

stippled plate which was riveted fast to the leather collar.

You've heard the statement, "I'm fond of dogs but can't stand cats." It's a common remark. I have a theory in regard to this: that those who say it are egotistic, that the only reason they can't stand cats is because a cat is so like *themselves.* Touchy, I mean; quick to take offense; so swollen up with the personal "I" that the slightest affront will injure its pride.

Whereas with a dog one's ego is fed. You can whip a dog and he'll forgive you—not only that, he will lick your hand. To the rest of the world you're a rotten stinker, but he still gives you unquestioning love.

I was not surprised, then, seeing the skipper glower at Sadie when he came by with the navy commander, going ashore. The latter signed off, "Good luck to you, captain," shaking his hand, and went down the plank; and Willets whirled around on the bos'n.

"GILPIN, I'll have no cats in my ship."

"But this 'un, cap'n—this here's *Sadie.*"

"I don't give a damn if it's Queen Marie. I'll have no cats!"

You could see the outrage starting to blaze in the bos'n's eyes.

"You don't understand, sir. This un's different. Sadie's a sea cat—very good luck. It ain't ev'ry ship she'll travel on, and she never goes more'n a one-way passage. Last heard, she stowed aboard in Nagasaki. And a year afore that—"

"Never mind!" roared Willets. "Where she's traveled means nothing to me. I said I won't have cats in my ship."

"Sadie goes, *I* go," Gilpin answered, his eyes no longer light blue but dark. "Warn't for her, I'd 'a' gone and drowned four years ago off Punta Este. She's in my boat. The others was lost. Sadie's good luck."

I pretended to be very interested in something upon the stringpiece below. The marine was there, and because he was the bos'n would have to stay with the ship. Willets knew this—or at least he did if he wasn't too sore at the moment to think. But all he said was, "That's my order," and turned on his heel.

I was well aware, the same as Gilpin, that the Old Man realized he was licked. For he had not said a thing to me about seeing his order was carried out.

The bos'n grinned. "Well, Sadie old girl, let's go to the galley and see if cook's anything fitten to eat."

Night fell, the way it does in the tropics, just as if somebody'd pulled a switch. Dark caught us while we were passing Flamenco, one of those lethal fortified islands guarding the channel beyond Balboa. Our pilot snaked us through the mine field. His chore was done. I could see the launch come closing aboard to take him off: and to Willets he cheerioed, "Good luck, captain!" as he started down from our shadowy bridge.

Again! All this emphasis placed on luck was beginning to rasp a bit on the nerves. A floating powder keg called Tobango was setting out on a lonely trek which would take her 5,000 nautical miles before—and *if*—she kept her tryst with a convoy sailing from San Francisco. Whatever might meanwhile cross her track—a prowling cruiser, a submarine, or a flock of planes from some enemy carrier—would have exactly one five-inch gun to keep it from finishing off our ship!

I escorted the pilot to the ladder. We had reached the rail when out of the darkness there sounded a low yet insistent *meow.* Right at his feet!

Sadie's voice brought a chill. In sudden dismay, I thought, Oh-oh. She's had a few hours to inspect this tramp, and she knows her ships, and doesn't like ours! Now she's here to go off with the pilot. So jumpy, so superstitious I felt, I was sure her instincts must have warned her the old Tobango was headed for doom.

Sweat began streaming down my face, despite the night breeze blowing from shore. Sadie arched her back on the pilot's leg, and the pilot stooped and patted her head. And then—blessed sight—I saw her yawn and go strolling *away.*

So all was well. The omens were good—until, after sixteen days had passed without sighting a ship, our feline oracle gave us a sign.

BUT during this lapse of tranquil calm, the old tramp making her steady westings at thirteen knots day in, day out, Sadie had disappeared to reap the crop of her nights on the beach. She emerged with a litter of four, ranging from replica red to soot gray, and fetched them each by the scruff of the neck to the galley entrance.

An old story with Sadie, this motherhood stuff. She had offspring scattered all over the world. Port Said's alleyways knew their yowling, if the bos'n's account of her travels was true; and Calcutta's nights and Mozambique's, New

York's and Frisco's and Singapore's had echoed the cries of Sadie's sons, the come-on challenge of Sadie's daughters.

And yet her solicitude for this brood was as great as though they had been her first, and Sadie accepted with patent pride all the fuss that was made over them and her by their godfather Gilpin, the men off watch, and the navy detail for manning our gun.

These last were particularly attentive. They christened the kittens such fancy names as Whisky Sour and Panama Sal, Marlene Dietrich, and one—a red hellion—General Douglas Bataan MacArthur.

Gunner's Mate Gurley was standing by, an enchanted grin on his tough, tanned face, that afternoon when Sadie decided to parade her kittens up on the bridge. It was as though she had suddenly thought, The skipper hasn't inspected them yet, and shipboard nicety requires that I present my children to him. So up the ladder she lugged her kids, then passed in review before the Old Man. Four kittens piping like drunken sailors, blind drunk and singing Sweet Adeline in four off keys, while their mother said "See!" and rubbed her back against Willets' calf!

His face was a study, his impulse plainly to pitch all five of them in the sea. But down on deck stood Gunner's Mate Gurley, his homely countenance lifted aloft in manifest pleasure at this performance. Homely but hard when he chose to be: a two-fisted P. O. whose confident scorn of all opposition was plain.

Truth is, I believe that Captain Willets felt somewhat cowed in Gurley's presence. The gunner's mate was Regular Navy, with the regular's patronizing tolerance of those who belonged to the mere Reserve.

"Her-rumph!" Rather red in the face, but smiling a forced, false smile, the Old Man addressed Sadie: "Very good. Very—yes, very creditable. Cute little devils. You've done very well." Then he turned, as if some one inside had called him, and hastily made his retreat from the bridge.

So the days, like the sea, moved serenely on until, when we were nearing the date line, the Tobango approached that dot on the chart which indicated our rendezvous. Westward the sky was lowering leaden, and I told the Old Man we were in for a squall.

He came from the cabin to see for himself.

"H'mph!"—sort of bristling, as though that sky were regarded by him as a mortal affront. I saw him glance aft, then glare at something; and after long moments had passed like this, Willets looking away but always returning to stare at whatever it was back there, my curiosity got too strong and I ambled out to see for myself.

That sight sent a cold chill tingling down my spine. As a war precaution, all four of our boats were carried outboard, ready to lower without the delay of swinging them off their cradle chocks. When first I looked, Red Sadie stood poised upon the rail with one gray kitten clutched in her mouth. There it hung by its neck, making plaintive cries, while its mother was crouching, tail very tense, eyes gauging the distance. And then she sprang.

If she missed her mark, both she and the kitten—either Whisky Sour or Panama Sal—would splash in the sea and be lost astern. But she didn't miss. Sure-footed, exact, she twisted to light on all fours on the gunwale, then dropped to the floor of our No. 1 boat and stowed her kitten beside two others beneath a thwart.

THE captain said nothing. Nor I, of course, for it was my job to be watching ahead. But when the last transfer had been completed, the Old Man spoke:

"What do you make of that, Mr. Pladek?"

"Frankly, I don't like it," I said.

"Why not?"—with a snort.

"Well, sir, she wouldn't have done it for fun. Too much danger. No mother with young would take that chance without good reason."

"What reason?" he challenged. And then I guessed—for it seemed apparent that the bos'n's words were as much in the Old Man's thoughts as in mine—that what he wanted was confirmation of his fears.

"Remember, sir, what Gilpin said. She was in the wreck of the Southern Star and knows what a boat like that is for!"

The skipper just grunted. He raised his glasses and searched the horizon astern, off the quarters, abeam, and ahead. Then the sun went under and doused all light, for here was no sunset afterglow. Darkness covered the face of the sea as Willets paced the bridge.

"You know, Mr. Pladek, nature's a very mysterious thing. Maternal instinct—makes no difference whether it's human, beast, or bird—nature sharpened a mother's senses, tells her what you or I couldn't know."

"Yes, sir," I nodded, puzzled by him. The Old Man sounded apologetic, as though he were fearful that I might think he was going balmy.

"H'mph! Ring stop the engines," he barked.

The telegraph jangled, informing the bridge that the order was being executed. I heard Willets talk at the engine-room tube:

"Cut out dynamo, switch to batteries. I don't want any hammering, mind, if you take a fool notion to make some repairs."

The chief mate, Steinhardt, came hurrying up to see what was wrong, and the Old Man whispered, "Playing a hunch. We're ahead of schedule meeting our escort. Time to burn. If a submarine *was* tracking our sound," Willets continued, defiantly gruff, "we've queered their fix. Let 'em listen in on their hydrophone till they're blue in the face." Then he added, "Her-rumph!"

The rain squall broke to lash the Tobango, hissing like steam on our parboiled decks. It passed, but the overhead sky stayed black. And then, as the silence of night returned untroubled by storm, my hair stood on end with that steady hammer-blow sound dead astern. Diesels! There was no question of it. Diesel engines pounding the screws of some craft unseen in the easterly murk!

"Three miles?" husked Willets. "Send for that gunner's mate at once. Warn the crew to keep quiet. Any man so much as opens his mouth gets put in irons."

As I reached the ladder a shadowy figure came bounding up the steps. It was Gurley. No need of summoning him to the bridge. He was as wise to those sounds back there and what they implied as the skipper.

Their beat like the throb of some jungle drum, a tom-tom pounding the call to war, grew steadily louder.

INEXORABLY it pounded nearer. The periscope on it had picked us out while the sun still shone; and when darkness fell it had broached, then started hell-bent on our course at a surface speed of some eighteen knots—five faster than ours. There was just one hope. With our screw no longer churning a wake, our dynamo motionless making no sound, the man at the listening gear would report we were still out of range, some miles up ahead, and the submarine *might* slip on past without discovering our presence.

I found Steinhardt and Gilpin preparing the searchlight for instant use. It was swung to starboard upon a bearing of, roughly, 140° on the line of our keel, a quartering slant, and Willets stood out in the wing, ready to give the order for light.

"Men all warned, sir," I reported.

"Very good, Mr. Pladek," the skipper came back. Even then I sensed he was playing a role: he was John Paul Jones on his "quarterdeck," calm and polite and stilted of speech, using the wordage of naval command!

"I mean to engage him," Willets added. That professional "him," which is proper usage when one refers to an enemy force! "On the target?" the Old Man called.

"Yes, sir," Steinhardt answered.

The skipper was leaning out over the rail, sifting those hammer blows nearing our stern.

"Mr. Pladek! As soon as we have engaged, ring full speed ahead. Her-rumph! *On, light!*"

It was as though some movie director had shouted, "Camera!" The film unreeled—unreeled on a sequence of melodrama as hectic as anything staged on a set. Our searchlight flooded the conning tower, blinding the Japs on its bridge.

Almost at once our gun exploded, orange flame bursting out of its snout as if a sea serpent had suddenly belched. *Crash!* We were firing at point-blank range, and that shell cut through the conning tower as though it were made of soup-can tin. While I rang for the engines I noted the hole which had opened up just below the bridge. Steel splinters went flying. The cries of wounded rose from the deck.

But over them all came the battle shout of Gunner's Mate Gurley, aft on the poop. Unprintable, mostly; yet none who heard him, whether or not he knew our language, could have missed the meaning of Gurley's words, their savage intent.

"Yellow sons-of—" *Whoom!* In a matter of seconds the bore had been swabbed, a shell rammed home, the breach block locked, the muzzle trained, and the lanyard tripped.

That second hit was enough for the Japs. They couldn't submerge, for the conning-tower hatch was twisted askew; nor did they have time to unclutch their Diesels and flood the tanks. Every man on their bridge had been wounded or killed. But one officer, rushing on deck from below, frantically waved a white blouse in the light and hollered again and again:

"Surrender!"

"STOP your engines," bawled Willets. "Stand by!" He seemed to be wrestling out there in the wing, having a mortal bout with himself while he snapped his orders in quick succession. "Cease firing."

"Aye, aye, sir," Gurley answered.

"C Division, man starboard boats! Steinhardt, come down here. Keep light on 'em, bos'n. Pladek, get aft and tell the gunner I want every middy his men have got. And rifles. We've got to take off prisoners, got to look like a man-o'-war."

John Paul Willets! The Old Man was all right. He appreciated the fix we were in—a tramp still vulnerable to attack, only one gun against torpedoes the Japs could yet launch if they happened to guess. For they thought we must be a navy vessel, a corvette at the least. Still blinded by light, unable to see us here in the dark, they did not know how thin we were spread.

So that's what his "C Division" had meant!

Hurrying back to report to him, I found Captain Willets in the chartroom, stripped to his drawers, instructing Steiny. The latter was stuffed in a uniform that was several sizes too small for him—the tropical whites of the Naval Reserve, on the shoulders the two and a half gold stripes of lieutenant commander. The Old Man's suit! He had thrown it on just before "engaging"; had been wearing it on the pitch-black bridge; and that wrestling I'd noticed had been our small skipper divesting himself of the pants and blouse for Steinhardt to don!

WILLETS knew his duty. He made no mistakes. As master in charge of the tramp Tobango he was obliged to stay with his ship, leaving to Steiny the exciting detail of taking those prisoners off the sub.

No motleyer crew ever manned two boats on such an assignment. White middy blouses, blue dungarees, hair twice as long as regulation, three types of rifles, a blackjack or two— But they wangled the Japs. They got them aboard. They secured our damaged prize with a hawser.

By the time we dropped our hook in Sydney news of our feat had already arrived by way of wireless from Pago Pago. As a consequence the old Tobango was tendered a bang-up demonstration.

What a day for Willets! He stood in the midst of all that to-do, his thin lips quirked in a quiet smile.

I heard him raise his voice: "Her-rumph! This is all very nice of you. But credit should go where credit's due. If you gentlemen will come with me, I'll show you the lady who captured the sub."

"Lady!" The way that word was gasped, you caught the sensation it was causing.

The Old Man led them to his cabin, marshaling them one by one past the door. On the bunk lay Sadie taking her ease, her kittens around her.

She stretched herself when Willets entered, then graciously rose to accept his pats.

"I hope," he was saying, "she'll stay with the ship. But afraid she won't. She's a one-voyage cat."

He was right. When at last they assigned us a berth and we hooked the gangplank over our scupper, Sadie stood waiting on deck to debark. She was the first one over the side. Behind, single file, her offspring wobbled, each little tail held high like her own—as if they were waving the Stars and Stripes.

THE END

CHRISTMAS PRESENT—Continued from page 16

And the other packages in the back of the car. . . . Joyce said, "Oh, shoot!" and blinked her long lashes, wondering what on earth she could get for herself, because dad would be hurt if she didn't get something. That was Christmas; and presents. No one was ever satisfied. Neither givers nor receivers.

Behind the counter the proprietor moved down to face the sergeant. "I called the terminal. Brace says the buses are booked solid. But you go down—there might be a cancellation."

The sergeant said, "Thank you." He had a deep easy voice. He pulled a pipe from his pocket; a worn pouch. He looked around, and Joyce spoke across the intervening stools: "Where are you going?"

His brown eyes met hers. "Pittsburgh."

"I'm driving through. I'll give you a lift."

He considered her a moment. "That's very kind of you. I'll be glad of it."

Joyce finished her salad; paid her check. When she turned to the door the sergeant was shrugging into his greatcoat. He picked up his bag and held the door for Joyce to go through. The air was still, intense.

The sergeant looked at the sky. "Snow. Maybe you better hole up."

Joyce lifted her shoulders in a shudder. "No, thanks. I've got to be in New York tomorrow. Get in."

THE big car purred. The heater sent out its warmth. Joyce stole a quick look at the sergeant's profile. It was really nice; pleasant. He couldn't be more than twenty-three. She said, "I'm Joyce Alington."

"I know. I'm Steve Baring."

Joyce smiled, looking at the road, cold and deserted. "How did you know me?"

"We see the papers and magazines," Steve Baring said. He had a slow engaging smile. "Even in Minnesota."

"You evidently know about me. What else about you?"

"Nothing much. I'm an engineer. University of Minnesota. Technical sergeant in the corps at present. Off for Officer Candidate School soon, and then—gold bars."

"That's concise," Joyce laughed. She saw him smile and she felt a lift. He *was* nice. Then her smooth brow puckered. "What on earth were you doing in that little town? There's no camp near."

"Old friends of my father live there. I've five days' leave. I was going to spend Christmas with them. I forgot to check up. They're in Florida—the house closed."

"So now Pittsburgh. A girl?"

He shook his head. "A lot of interesting plants. I may be able to get a pass and see some machinery."

Joyce looked at the road. Her gray eyes were bright. It was a simply colossal idea. Dad had said "anything." That could take in giving a soldier a whirl at New York. Dad would appreciate that. And it would be fun.

She turned her head. Steve Baring was peering from the side window up at the sky. "If this was Minnesota, I'd be scared. I smell a blizzard. A proper one."

"We don't have such things in the East," Joyce scoffed, widening her black-lashed eyes. Then she smiled. "Look, sergeant," she said. "Do you *have* to go to Pittsburgh?"

One brow lifted as Steve's eyes questioned. "I told you why I'm going."

"Then come right through to New York with me." She didn't give him a chance to express his obvious astonishment. "My father, General Alington, told me to buy myself a Christmas present. He said to get 'anything.'" She smiled at his puzzled face. "There isn't anything I want. But it would be a swell Christmas present to take you on to New York and give you a real holiday. At dad's expense."

Steve Baring considered her a long moment. He said at last, "That's pretty swell, Miss Alington. But Christmas is no time for strangers to be dragged into the family circle."

"Family circle?" Joyce laughed. "No fear of that. We haven't gathered around the tree since my parents were divorced. I'm not sure they did before that. I was in the nursery. Afterward Christmas always meant Florida to my sister and myself. Dinner for eighty on the terrace. Mock snow and stuff and Sue and I sent to bed early." She shook her head. "Don't worry about that. You'll be my Christmas present. I'll take you to all the spots and give you a time. How about it?"

Steve was looking at her oddly, and Joyce explained, "It'll solve a problem. I've got to find something for dad to give me. I can't think of a thing. That's the worst part of Christmas—thinking of presents for every one and for yourself. You'll really be doing me a favor."

SHE could feel his brown eyes on her and she turned her head. He was looking at her with an expression Joyce could not fathom. She smiled. "Well?"

He shook his head. "Thank you. But I'd rather go to Pittsburgh."

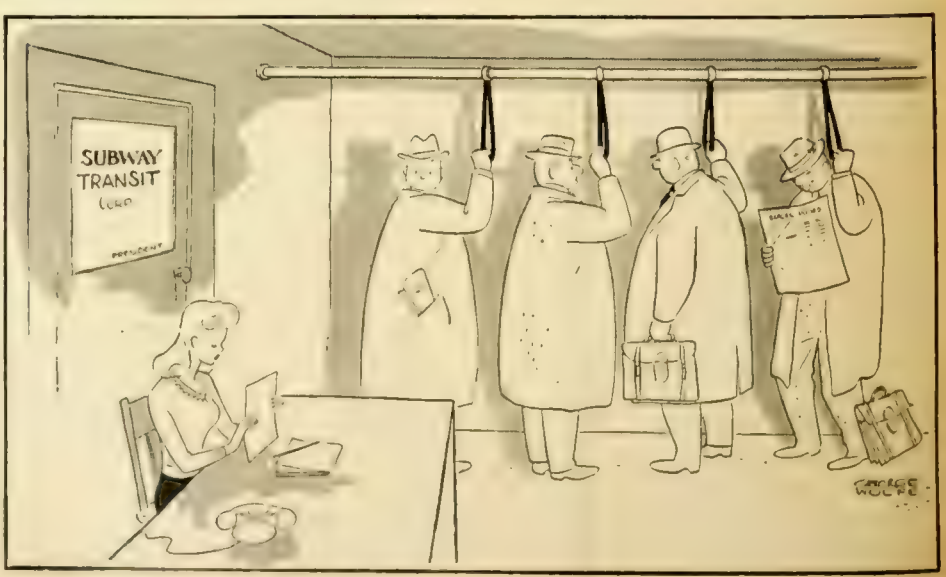
Joyce's eyes widened. "For pity's sake, why not? I'm offering you a great gob of fun."

Steve shook his head again. "You wouldn't understand—but thanks just the same."

Joyce felt a quick flare of anger. "You're being very mysterious and smug. Why wouldn't I understand?"

Steve looked at her. His eyes were pitying. "You're Joyce Alington. Just a name before I met you. Glamour girl and that sort of thing. I'm Steve Baring, a hulk from Minnesota. We've nothing in common. We don't even speak the same language. How can I make you understand how I look at things—at Christmas, say?"

Joyce broke in: "I see. I'm not sentimental enough about it. I don't think it all sweetness and light and simply swoon over wrapping presents." She shook her dark head. Her lips were mutinous against the disappointment still smarting in her. "Well, I'm not sentimental. I think Christmas is an awful bore and the



custom of giving and receiving presents a lot of rot."

She glared at Steve. He said, "Exactly. You're pretty young, aren't you?"

"I'm nineteen and I've been around. Everywhere."

"I bet," Steve said gently. "I'm much older and I haven't been anywhere. You see—we've nothing in common. So thanks again. Shall I get out here?"

Joyce's lips were tight. "No. And I think you're beastly."

It started to snow a little farther on. So fine that Joyce could hardly see the flakes. Steve was quiet and Joyce tried to dismiss him from her mind. In another three hours they would be in Pittsburgh. She would let him off, nod carelessly, and forget him. She turned on the radio and tuned in some soft swing from New York. She'd be there tomorrow. She concentrated on deciding whether she'd give Tommy Clarke or Sam Portington the bigger break. Or she might do the rounds with Val Broker.

There was construction up ahead. A big arrow under the "DETOUR." Joyce swung the car. Steve shifted. She looked at him as she straightened out on an obviously old and disused road. "Frightened, sergeant?"

Steve said quietly, "I am. Maybe I don't know the East, Miss Alington, but this isn't just snow. This is the real thing. If you're wise you'll stop at the first farm."

"Oh, gosh," Joyce said scornfully and turned her head back to the road. The snow was still fine but it was thickening. "Pittsburgh next. You'll be glad to get there and so will I. We'll be rid of each other."

STEVE didn't answer that. The snow began to crust the windshield. Joyce turned on the wipers. She was surprised to see the black road turning white. They weren't flakes now but hard white crystals. The countryside was misty in gray swirling wreaths.

The darkness came imperceptibly. Joyce turned on her fog lamps. They didn't help much. The car wheels began to slip. She began to get a little frightened, but Steve Baring was sitting there, big and quiet, and she felt better. She was furious with him but she was glad he was along.

It was some time later that she bucked the first drift. The car made it. Almost immediately they hit another, and this time the engine labored, stalled. Joyce started the motor again. Steve said, "Wait a moment." He opened the door. Snow swirled in as he got out and closed the door. Joyce peered through the windshield. She couldn't see Steve. Her breath caught and she made a motion toward the door. But it opened and Steve got in quickly. "We can't go on."

"I've chains," Joyce said.

Steve shook his head. "No use. We passed a light a half mile back. It'll be tough going, but I think it's a better chance than staying here." He looked at her squarely. "Not knowing the country, it'll be hard to find the place I saw. It's up to you."

Joyce drew a deep breath. It was incredible, but she knew the danger was real. "All right. We go."

She switched off the ignition, put the keys in her pocket. Steve asked, "Got a scarf? Wrap it around your head and mouth." When she looked at him he explained, "You won't be able to breathe otherwise."

Joyce opened the glove compartment; took out a kerchief and tied it over her nose and lips. Steve said, "When we get out, take hold of my belt. Don't let go. If we get separated we may not find each other."

He opened the door. The swirling mist enveloped him. Joyce followed. She closed the door behind her and turned. Even through the folds of the silk kerchief the icy sting of the air sucked her breath away. The crystals, driving, beat at her with prying fingers. Panic seized her for the moment. Then she felt Steve's gloved hand. At her ear his voice shouted, "Get hold of my belt."

Joyce caught hold, took a firm grip; felt Steve move forward.

"There's a fence," Steve said over his shoulder. "The light was down a break in it."

Stumbling blindly, Joyce followed. She couldn't see where they were going. She could see nothing but the dancing black-gray mist when she opened her eyes; the pellets that stung at her cheeks sifted under her scarf.

She felt Steve's back as he stopped. His voice was muffled. "There's the fence. Hold tight."

She followed, holding fast to his belt. She didn't even think how much worse it must be for Steve, breaking for her. She lost all sense of time. It seemed ages that they stumbled through the drifting snow. Then Steve shouted, "The break!"

Joyce lifted her face from her collar. She could see nothing. Against her furred hat Steve said, "Try and keep an eye out for the light. It wasn't more than a hundred yards in. We've got to find the house—shelter."

That was all he said, but Joyce felt a chill at her heart. They went even more slowly. Her legs were dead weights; her thighs burned with every step. She was frightened clear through. But she lifted her head and peered through the snow and saw nothing; felt only the sting that brought the tears to her eyes.

It was Steve who cried at last, "The light! There it is."

Joyce couldn't answer. Her hand was numbed. She let go of his belt for a moment. When she put out her hand again he wasn't there. Panic seized her. She called, "Steve. Steve!"

"I'm a bricklayer by trade, but I know a good deal about military subjects."

She didn't see him. She felt his hand touch her, fumble for her arm. "Take it easy. This way."

Joyce swallowed; angry with herself for crying out—furious with Steve for speaking to her like that. But she stayed close to him, holding to his arm. She saw the light mistily and then Steve's feet clumped against wood. They came around a corner and the whip of the wind was suddenly gone; the machine-gun drive of the snow. Joyce drew a deep free breath and felt her legs tremble.

She was numbed; exhausted. She felt Steve's clasp tighten on her arm, draw her up onto the little porch. She heard him knock. She didn't see the door open. She only sensed the yellow light on her face. Some one said, "Oh, come in," and Steve's hand propelled her forward.

Warmth flowed about her. She lifted her head and blinked her wet lashes. Steve was saying, "Miss Alington's car got stuck, back a ways. I wonder if you'd let us wait out the storm—"

"Of course." It was a woman's voice—young, full. Joyce pulled her gloves from aching stiffened fingers and fumbled for her handkerchief. She wiped her wet face, opened her eyes and saw the woman before her. A girl not much older than herself. A girl with red cheeks, brown hair, and pansy-brown eyes. A girl who smiled at her as she helped Joyce out of her coat. "I'll get some coffee. Just you sit down."

She went quickly from the room and Joyce sat down, her hands going up to remove the bedraggled fur hat. Steve Baring was taking off his coat. "You all right?"

"I—I'm all right."

Steve nodded shortly. "If this gives over you'll be able to get to New York for Christmas."

HE turned away, fumbling for his pipe, and Joyce frowned at him. She knew she looked awful. She knew she'd acted like a scared kid—but things like this storm were new to her even if they were an old story to him. She wished it was morning and the storm over—the roads open. She'd drop him in Pittsburgh like a hot penny.

The girl came back carrying a tray with steaming cups. She set the tray on a table in the small poorly furnished room. She looked at Joyce with bright eyes. "What a lovely suit—" Then she got pink. "I'm Mary Marsh. Mrs. John Marsh."

Joyce took the coffee. "I'm Joyce Alington. And that—that's Sergeant Steve Baring. We—I don't want to make you any trouble, Mrs. Marsh."

Mary Marsh laughed. "Oh, no. I'm happy to have you. My husband is away. He's in the navy—a radio man. I—it's pretty lonely at times. I've a room for you, Miss Alington." She turned to Steve. "You won't mind sleeping on the couch, Sergeant Baring?"

"Not a bit." The way he smiled at Mrs. Marsh made Joyce dislike him intensely. "You put Miss Alington to bed, ma'am, and then you tell me what chores you want done for the night."

"Oh, there's nothing," Mary Marsh said. She was small and dainty, even with hands coarsened by work. She smiled brightly. "This is really exciting for me. The children asleep and no one but me—and this storm." She looked at Joyce. Her face changed. "I'm sorry. Please come, Miss Alington. You're dead tired."

Joyce wanted to protest, but she couldn't. She got up with an effort and let Mary Marsh lead her away.

WHEN she woke, the room was only half light. The snow still beat with frantic fingers at the curtained window, and beyond, everything was gray. She sat up in bed and almost cried out. Every bit of her ached. But she could smell the fragrance of coffee—hear voices. She got up and dressed. Her wrist watch said it was almost ten o'clock. When she opened the door and stepped out into the living room she saw the two children—a boy of five and a girl of four. They were standing at the window, looking out at the snow. They turned and looked at her, wide-eyed, shy. Pale-haired, pink-cheeked. Clean and sturdy. Joyce said, "Hello." The little girl smiled; the boy stared. Then Mary Marsh came into the room. She said, "Good morning. You'll want to wash and have breakfast."

"Where's Sergeant Baring?" Joyce asked, and Mary Marsh said, "He's out in the hen house." She added, "I've a hundred hens—he's being ever so much help."

Steve came in as Joyce was finishing her breakfast. His head was bare, powdered with snow. He had a basket of eggs. He set them on the kitchen table and nodded at her. "Good morning. It's letting up. But I'm afraid you won't be able to get to New York in time for Christmas."

Mary Marsh's bright face was sympathetic. "That's a shame, Miss Alington." Steve lifted one brow and Joyce said, without thinking, "I don't mind. Christmas doesn't mean very much to me."

The little girl was holding to her mother's skirt. Steve said, "I'll get that tree." He grinned at the children as they moved to him. "Too deep." He nodded to Joyce, "John and Mary. Maybe you'd tell them a story—not about Santa, if you object."

He turned away, and Joyce looked after him resentfully. But little Mary was looking up at her wide-eyed. "Do you know stories?"

"Oh, yes," Joyce said, and Mrs. Marsh laughed: "You've let yourself in for something."

The square oilstove was sending out welcome warmth in the neat living room. John looked at her steady-eyed. Mary said, "Tell us about Santa Claus and his reindeer."

Joyce looked at them, trying desperately to remember. But she couldn't think of the names of any but Donder and Blitzen. When she was a child she hadn't heard any Christmas stories. Not from her mother or father. They'd been too busy. And her nurses had changed so often. If they'd told her any Christmas stories she couldn't remember. She thought wryly, Now if you kids would ask me about what goes on at Twenty-one . . . But the children were waiting, and with a mental shrug Joyce began, "Once upon a time . . ." You could always go on from there, and these children didn't scoff—they believed anything.

Mary Marsh came in only once. Her arms were white with flour. The children didn't even look around. Mrs. Marsh said, smiling, "It's awful, but I can't help being glad you're here. I'm baking, and having John and Mary out of the way is a luxury." She dimpled. "Christmas is such fun, isn't it?"

She went back before Joyce could answer. Chin on hand, little Mary asked, "What happened then? What did Puss in Boots do after that?"

Joyce invented wildly. She heard Steve's deep voice. There was the warm smell of things cooking. Outside it began to get lighter. Steve looked in to say, "You're all to come to lunch."

AFTER lunch the children wanted more stories. Steve came into the living room and sat down. He lighted his pipe, and Joyce faltered, feeling his eyes on her. But she went on and Steve left in a few minutes.

The snow had stopped when Mary Marsh came in and called the children to their supper. Joyce hadn't realized how the time had fled. Steve was busy in a corner of the big kitchen. The sweet-smelling fir he had cut was against the wall behind him. Joyce helped Mary Marsh put the children to bed. They were wide-eyed, but Mary Marsh said, "You go to sleep. You can't see Santa come. He'll go away without leaving anything if you peek at

(*Continued on page 58*)

Calvert shows how_ with holidays near_ To triple your wisdom, and triple good cheer!

1. **"Give wisely,** my friend," says the Owl,
"You *know* Dad has quite enough ties;
But you'll tickle him pink with this glorious drink
Give him CALVERT, the grand whiskey prize!"

2. **"Serve wisely,** if friends should drop in
To join in a holiday toast;
Serve CALVERT, whose flavor wins connoisseurs' favor—
You'll be hailed as a *prince* of a host!"

3. **"Drink wisely!"** concludes the Old Owl,
"Drink CALVERT—that's friendly advice!
It's smoother, old fellow—deliciously mellow!
And a word to the wise should suffice!"

GIVE WISELY, SERVE WISELY, DRINK WISELY

Clear Heads Choose

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THE GIFT WITH THE "HAPPY BLENDING"

Calvert Distillers Corporation, New York City. BLENDED WHISKEY Calvert "Reserve": 86.8 Proof – 65% Grain Neutral Spirits.
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(*Continued from page 56*)
him. He's shy." The children's eyes went to Joyce and she nodded. When they said their prayers and asked blessing for their absent father, she felt her throat tighten.

Steve was setting the tree up in the living room, pipe in mouth, humming. Joyce went into the kitchen. Mary was coloring eggs and she smiled, "I know. But the children won't think it funny to have Easter eggs at Christmas." She looked up as Steve came in. "It's too bad the radio isn't working. It would be just right with carols. But the battery is dead."

Steve looked at Joyce. "Storage battery. Plates are gone. If we had the battery from your car . . ."

His brown eyes were quizzical. Joyce flushed. "It's yours if you can get it."

"I think I can," Steve said. "There's an old sled in the tool house." He went out.

Joyce turned and found Mary Marsh looking at her. Mary said, "It must be awful for you . . . not to be able to get home."

"It isn't," Joyce said. "I'm not missing anything. It must be worse for you with your husband away."

Mary said, "He's all right. He has to be." Her voice was low, clear, confident.

Something happened to Joyce then. She didn't know what—couldn't identify what she felt. She said, "I'll help you with the presents for the children."

Mary smiled. "There's just an old doll of mine for little Mary. I didn't have a chance to shop. I wasn't going to get much anyhow. Just some candy and things. I've a pullover I knitted for Johnny. Cakes and nuts in their stockings. . . . They won't know the difference. It's good they don't expect much."

Joyce stared at her. She was looking at Mary when Steve came in. He picked up his coat. "I'll get at it. We'll have music anyhow."

He didn't look at Joyce. She said, "I'll go too. I want to get a bag—if there's room on your sled."

"There's room," Steve said, and Mary jumped up. "You'd better wear my boots, Joyce."

It was still and cold—a white unbroken world outside. The snow was powdery. The broad wooden sled slid over the surface, but Joyce floundered after Steve.

Only the fence tops showed the road, but one side was almost clean where the snow had drifted. It was easy going to the car.

The near side of the car was completely snowed under—but the lee side was approachable. Steve got the battery and set it on the sled. He straightened and looked at Joyce, "I think maybe you'll be able to get away tonight. They're sure to be clearing the roads by now. Still want the bag?"

"Yes," Joyce said. "And the packages . . . all of them."

Together they pulled the sled back to the small weather-beaten house with its warm yellow windows. It seemed like an old friend to Joyce as they approached. And Mary in the door, crying, "Come in—quick! You must be frozen."

But Joyce wasn't. She was all warm. Steve piled the packages on the kitchen table and carried the battery into the living room. Mary looked at Joyce and Joyce laughed. "I thought we could at least make a few things for the children out of what I've got."

Mary said quickly, "But these are your Christmas presents . . . for your family, aren't they?"

"They're just presents," Joyce said. "They won't be missed."

From inside came the sound of music and then voices singing God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen. Mary looked up, bright-eyed, and Joyce smiled at her. "Isn't it nice?"

Steve came in as Joyce was busy changing the tags on the packages . . . the smart, gaily wrapped presents. The French nightgown. Sue would have scoffed at it—but Mary . . . the thought of how Mary would look when she opened it made Joyce's heart warm. The Irish linen handkerchiefs for Tommy Clarke—they'd do for Johnny. And the silk scarf for Cousin Betty Smith—it would make a perfect frock for little Mary's doll. She ripped it open—turned to wide-eyed Mary. "Needle and thread. We're making a dress for the doll."

LATER Steve came in and took the packages and set them under the tree he had been decorating. He'd done a good job. Joyce said so when she carried in the box of candy, each piece wrapped in bright foil. "It's nice. Can you use these?"

He didn't answer. He looked at her and nodded. The quizzical light was gone from his eyes.

They were at supper when there was a knock on the door. Steve went. He came back with a tall State trooper. The man said, "Miss Alington. Glad we found you. They've been burning up the wires—your father and the press services. We found your car. The road is passable now. If you like, we'll see you get to Pittsburgh anyhow."

Joyce looked at Mary. Mary was sitting there—a shadow on her face. She looked at Steve. He was pulling at his pipe, his face still. Joyce said, "It's kind of you, but I shan't be leaving tonight."

She went with the trooper into the living room. She said, "You can do something for me, though. I'll

COLONEL STOOPNAGLE'S FICTIONARY *(Unabashed)*

KISSTLETOE: Popular Christmas plant belonging to the tulip family.

DRESSTITUTION: When a woman says she simply hasn't a thing to wear. (Which is most of the time.)

AFRAIDIO: How der Führer und Musso must feel when they hear our short wave.

STRAPLING: A young man who has to be taken frequently to the woodshed.

SQUADWRANGLE: A four-sided fight between the coach, the captain, and two players.

RUNDEZVOUS: What it becomes when her fiancé discovers you on the sofa with her.

CLAREVOYANT: When the new congresswoman looks into the future.

HEIRESSTOCRAT: A blue-blooded lady whose husband left her a neat hunk of change.

ARKUPATION: Brother Noah's job when it rained forty days and forty nights.

INCOME-PREHENSIBLE: A tax return that you cannot understand—and don't want to.

make a list of things. Can you have some one in the next town bring them out?"

"Sure," the trooper said. "Probably be late—but Christmas Eve, you know. I'll see you get the things."

When she went back into the kitchen, Steve and Mary were sitting where she had left them. She said to Mary, "You won't mind if I stay?"

Mary got up. Her eyes were shining. She said, "I was wishing you'd stay—wishing it as hard as hard." She came and put her arms about Joyce and kissed her.

Steve got up. Mary said, "Now you two go and sit. I'll be out soon. We've still got the stockings to fill."

IN the warm living room Steve looked at Joyce. His voice was low, "So you're not sentimental?"

She looked at him with wide gray eyes. "Maybe I am. What then?"

"It's swell," Steve said. "Swell. And so are you."

He looked at the pile of packages under the tree. "I suppose you've something there for me, too."

"If—if you'll take them."

He nodded. "I wish I had something I could give you. Some present that would make you as happy as I know your presents will make Mary and the kids."

Joyce smiled, her red lips parted. "That's all right. I'm getting the best Christmas present I ever received."

He lifted his head. Joyce said, "We've everything, haven't we now?"

"Most everything." He rubbed his pipe against his cheek. "If we had a bit of mistletoe."

Joyce laughed. She bent and picked up one of the packages. She hadn't been mistaken. Under the red ribbon the waxen berries and green of the sprig of mistletoe showed. She unfastened the ribbon and stood up—showing the spray in her hand.

Steve's eyes met hers. Joyce said, "You can hang this—oh, most anywhere—afterward."

His chest was hard—his arms strong and his kiss firm and young. She'd never felt like this before—and she'd been kissed before. She clung to him. Above her, Steve said, "Just the same, I wish I had a present for you, Joyce."

She put her fingers on his lips and shook her head. She couldn't tell him what was so very clear to her now: That presents didn't matter. It was Christmas itself—the very spirit of Christmas, warm and loving, all-embracing—that was the grandest present one could get. A very gift from the herald angels. She'd never had a chance to know it before—but she knew it now.

THE END

TRICKS of TRADES

CONSTRUCTION engineers about to build a skyscraper often find that the site is pure mud and that they must go many feet down to find the bedrock on which the building's foundation must be built. Mud, however, flows like water, and for many years engineers were stumped for a relatively cheap and efficient method of holding the mud back.

Today standard practice is to freeze the mud into ice, blast their excavation down to bedrock, build their foundations up to street level, and go ahead with their building. A refrigeration plant is set up, refrigeration circulating pipes are sunk into the mud, then removed, after the foundations are "in."

SCIENTISTS have found that the most difficult of all things for the human mind to bear is indecision. They have developed a neat trick to prove that point with dogs. First, two steel rings are hung up, one a circle and the other an ellipse. A dog is trained to take some small object to the circular ring and never to the elliptical one. Day by day this routine was rehearsed. Gradually, however, each day a little more, the shape of the elliptical ring was changed to make it more nearly a circle. As the two rings became more and more similar, the dog's indecision grew; when the two rings became identical the dog suffered a complete nervous breakdown.

This sounds like cruelty to animals, but it should be added that the dog, after having helped solve one of the perplexities of humanity, was carefully nursed back to mental health.

SOME bridges are built by having two crews start from the opposite banks of the space to be spanned. When they meet at the center, the structural members must meet exactly. Because of small errors, they do not always do so, so the builders resort to trickery. They place cakes of ice on the steel members of one side of the bridge. This causes the steel to contract, draws the bridge into a different shape, and makes the rivet holes meet exactly.

MILLIONS who have seen flea circuses have wondered how these insects could be trained to dance and drive and do other stunts. Secrets of the business are closely guarded. But one of them has come to light. This: The flea that jumps over a hurdle is trained for hours when he is "young" to hop only so high, with a glass lid on the box he's in giving him his height limit when he leaps, countless times a day. Thus, when he is put into the ring to perform, his hurdle is adjusted to the jump he does with such hairbreadth exactitude.

A DUCK in Depew Park, Peekskill, New York, had a fight with a snapping turtle and lost its upper bill. Seeing its distress, a dentist of the town suggested an artificial mandible. The municipal park commission gave its consent to the operation, and a technician of the Peekskill Dental Laboratory made a *plastic* upper bill for the duck, using stainless steel ligature wire to keep it in place.

TO make sure that no man and machine hours be wasted, our munitions manufacturers use new ways to examine every casting and forging in the rough before any further work is done on it. Here's one: Steel particles are wetted with kerosene to make them stick, and then applied to the whole surface of a casting or forging; then an electric current is sent through the piece. By the way the particles form ridges above an internal flaw an inspector can decide if the piece should be thrown out. In this fashion he can detect cracks not even revealed by the X-ray!

EVEN fur experts have difficulty in telling a finely "blended," or dyed, mink coat from one made of matched natural skins, known in the trade as "Eastern." But "blended" furs are not to be despised as inferior, and those who do the work are esteemed as artists, for they take the best quality of skins, except for their pale brown and reddish color, and lightly apply a dark brown dye with a goose feather to the surface, and lo, it takes on that lovely shade which "Eastern" mink has by nature. The work calls for a keen eye and a delicate touch.

[Readers are invited to send us any good trick of the trade they know—involving either trade or profession—and Liberty will pay $5 each for those accepted. Keep the item short, from 50 to 150 words. Address your contribution to Tricks of Trades Editor, Liberty Magazine, 205 East 42d Street, New York.]

"I quite agree that we have left it too long," he said in his insolent drawl. "But I shan't wait any longer for the King's commission; I shall try to get into one of the Loyalist regiments as soon as possible."

"Why, you damned impertinent interfering young blackguard," said St. John softly, and they stood very still, looking into each other's eyes across the room.

"I consider that provocation, sir," said David through quivering lips. "My friends will call on you tomorrow to arrange a meeting."

"Boys, that's quite enough of that," said Aunt Anabel with unexpected authority. "You are not to fight him, Sinjie, do you hear?"

"If I do fight him," said St. John, "it must be now; because after today I shan't have time for sport."

"If you do," remarked Regina calmly above her embroidery, "you never need come here again—either of you."

"But surely you would not have me tolerate an insult like that!" David pleaded.

"I would have you both behave like sensible people," she told him. "And I refuse to have my lawn turned into a battlefield."

DAVID glanced uncertainly at St. John, who gave him a thin smile. "If you are prepared to waive the privilege of this house for the privilege of being run through on the lawn, I am prepared to accommodate you within the next five minutes," he said. "Though I confess the pleasure would be for me inadequate compensation."

"We shall meet again at Philippi," said David picturesquely, glowering at him, and St. John bowed and turned to his hostess.

"Regina, will you ask some one to pack my saddlebags and bring my horse around? I shall leave at once."

"Don't trouble, dear—I'll tell them myself. Come, David," said Aunt Anabel firmly, and left the room with her hand hooked through David's elbow.

Dorothea still sat limply at the spinet, her hands resting on the keys. The silence of the room drew taut around her, and neither of the other two would be the first to break it.

"Aren't we to go home with you?" she asked quietly.

"No. It would be too much of a scramble. I'll send back word as soon as I know, and you can travel down comfortably with Joshua." He went to her with compassion, lifted her passive hands from the keyboard, and found them cold in his. "Child, I'm sorry it had to come on you like this. But you knew very well it was bound to come, didn't you?"

With a sob she threw herself into his arms and clung convulsively round his neck. He held her tenderly, his cheek against her wet one.

"Now, now, you're not to cry, either. You know it makes wrinkles!" he soothed her. "I've been on bad terms with myself for some time—you could see that. I'd like to think better of myself as soon as possible, and that's why I'm going north now at last."

"YOU can doubtless think very highly of yourself," said Regina, pulling viciously at a knot in her embroidery silk, "when you are at the end of a hangman's rope!" And she added, while Dorothea stared at her in horror from St. John's embrace, "That's what it will come to, you know. Because it's treason, as Washington himself may yet find out!"

"Regina, I've had about enough of your damned Tory nonsense!" St. John left his sister and descended upon the woman he loved, terrible in his righteous wrath. "If it weren't for your petticoats you'd have been jailed long ago. It's not fair to your father, for one thing—nor to me, if that matters to you at all!"

"Strange to relate, it doesn't matter to me in the least," she said, and her voice and her fingers shook above the embroidery now.

He mastered a flaming retort with visible effort.

"I shall be leaving in a few minutes for I don't know how long," he said, instead. "Let's try, before I go, to look at this thing calmly."

"I prefer not to look at it at all. I prefer to dismiss it."

"Then, by heaven, you must dismiss me with it, once and for all!" he cried, and cast a stricken look at Dorothea where she stood paralyzed in the middle of the floor.

"I—I'll go," she whispered, and fled from the room. St. John resumed where he had left off.

"You must make up your mind, my dear," he said, and set his hands on the back of Regina's chair and leaned above her from behind, till his cheek was near her hair, and his voice dropped low and fierce into her ear. "You must choose now between me and the King, because you can't have us both any longer."

"Then I choose the King!" she announced quickly, and her stitches were crooked and crazy in the pattern she could no longer see.

His arms came down over her shoulders and he caught her unsteady hands and his lips were against her neck.

"The King is a long way off," he reminded her softly. "The King doesn't hold you fast in his heart as I do. You wouldn't care for the King, my girl, not when you want a lover." His lips, hard and sweet, crept upward to her cheek, and she slipped into delicious laughter in his hold.

"Oh, St. John, you *are* a fool—why must I love you so—"

He caught the words on a kiss.

Then, while he knelt beside her chair with his arms around her waist and hers across his shoulders—

"Let them fight their war," she whispered. "It's nothing to us—is it! Don't go, St. John. Choose between me and Washington."

He made a little sound of amusement and regret without moving.

"I'll give up the King," she whispered, and kissed his ear.

"I should damn well think so!" he laughed, and raised his head, and his eyes with their candid curving lashes were very bright. "Has anybody ever even *tried* to tell you how beautiful you are?"

"And so you must give up Washington," she persisted softly, and took his face between her white hands. "That's only fair."

"Kiss me," he commanded, and she obeyed him like a woman wed. "Never waste that on a king," he murmured, and hid his face in her palms.

"Say you'll give up Washington," she whispered, bending over him.

"But I won't," he said into her hands, and felt her stiffen, and looked her in the face with a rueful smile. For a long moment their eyes held, and she could not but recognize the unswerving purpose in his.

"You beast!" she cried—but it was the protest of a child who had been duped with a sugarplum.

"Because I saw through you all the time?" he smiled.

"I HATE you!" she cried, and believed it.

"You love me, thank the Lord. And when I come back I'll prove it to you all the rest of our lives."

"If you go today," she said passionately, "I hope you never come back!"

His face whitened and he rose abruptly from his knee and turned away from her. She rose too, to her full height, only a couple of inches less than his.

"Understand me, St. John. I will never marry a man who has borne arms against the King!"

"I thought we had finished with the King," he remarked—and for the first time she flushed under his

possessive gaze. "Besides, the Prince of Hesse-Cassel is not my king, and the scum and scrapings of his gutters and pigsties are not my countrymen. Don't you see, the quarrel is no longer between the colonies and the mother country! It has become a contest betwen Magna Charta and a gang of unenlightened ruffians from Mittel Europa who never have known the meaning of liberty or acknowledged the rights of free men!"

"You sound exactly like Patrick Henry!" she jeered. "You will meet British soldiers on any battlefield you come to, and you know it!"

"Yes, and with their hearts not in it, as we all know!"

"And so you would shoot them down because they are brave men doing their duty!"

He looked at her with affectionate despair.

"They will have an equal chance of shooting me first," he reminded her, and saw her lips tighten. "I know this comes very hard for you, my dear. You are used to having your own way about everything. And if you can't catch your flies with honey you must lay about you till they are all dead on the floor. But that's no good, either, this time, Regina. You can't come between a man and his conscience."

"If you leave this house today," she said steadily, "I never want to see you again as long as I live."

He made a small polite ironical gesture of acceptance.

"But mark my words, you were not designed for spinsterhood, my girl," he said, and she gave an angry laugh.

"Well, really, St. John, one would think you were the only man in the world!"

"I am the only man for you," he told her very quietly. "I am the only man who can bend that domineering spirit of yours and make you like it, Regina, and if while my back is turned you marry some one else, may heaven have mercy on him, because you never will!" He walked away from her toward the door, and turned in the doorway, with the room between them, and his look was all tenderness again, as though he held her in his arms. "You will forgive me," he said—"some day." Smiling, he kissed his fingertips to her and was gone.

When she heard his horse's hoofs in the drive, she ran to the library window to watch him ride away, and knew that her heart hung at his saddlebow. I shall marry whomever I please, she told herself, dry-eyed, and began to cull over, in cold blood, the available Tories she knew. There was David Allen, of course, who was joining a Loyalist regiment. And there was Julian Day. . . .

ST. JOHN found a great deal of unfinished business awaiting him when he returned to Williamsburg. Before he could get clear of it, Washington had retreated from Brooklyn Heights and was preparing to abandon New York.

The Patriots' cause looked hopeless. It seemed a form of suicide to pin one's fortunes now to what might prove to be the commander in chief's last stand at the Harlem River, but in mid-September St. John was off to the North—grim and quiet in his new blue uniform, a handsome sword at his side.

Julian had moved back into his room above the school. Dreading the interview, but determined to behave as though there were no shadow across their friendship, St. John went round to say good-by.

Julian beheld the uniform without a change of expression, and offered a chair rather formally. St. John held out his right hand and said simply, "I'm off in the morning. Let's get it over."

Julian's clasp was quick and hard. "I suppose you will never understand why I can't go with you," he said.

And along with best wishes . . . a Christmas suggestion: *on your gift list, put lots of* PHILIP MORRIS *Cigarettes in gay Holiday packages* . . . fine to give, fine to get, America's FINEST Cigarette. CALL FOR PHILIP MORRIS!

HARDTACK

"I've been duck hunting with you before, dad!"

"I don't need to understand. You're right not to go if you've no wish to. You'll keep an eye on them for me, won't you—in Francis Street?"

"St. John, in heaven's name, what becomes of them if you—if Washington loses this war?"

"He isn't going to lose it."

"I wish I could believe that."

"I wish you could. And you will—later on."

"It isn't just because I can't believe it that I—that I'm not coming with you. I know it must look that way—as though I held back from a forlorn hope."

"Why, no; it doesn't have to look that way." But the words came without the usual ring of St. John's speech.

"If I could be sure of meeting only Hessians in the field— But it's fighting your own kind, St. John, men whose job it is to preserve the Empire, officered by fellows you might have been at school with! How do you face it?"

St. John's jaw tightened. "I don't face it," he said. "I just know I've got to do it—like giving your own brother a bloody nose for the good of his soul. This lunkheaded death-and-destruction on the throne needs a kick in the seat of his breeches. The British army can't do it—that would be mutiny. So the American army has to do it in spite of them. And we will! Meanwhile, I'm just a little easier in my mind about those two in Francis Street with you here than if you were charging around Harlem waving a sword—if that's any comfort to you!"

"I'll do the best I can for them," said Julian solemnly.

"Thank you. And there's one thing more," he said—and paused a moment. "Regina will make your life a hell on earth if you let her. I can master her. You can't. Never say I didn't warn you. Good-by, Julian."

IT was an altogether dismal autumn. All through October and November the post riders who swung stiffly out of their saddles in front of the Raleigh brought news which got worse, as Washington retreated from Harlem to White Plains, and then lost Fort Washington and evacuated Fort Lee, and began to fall back across New Jersey—Newark, New Brunswick, Princeton, Trenton, all were abandoned, one by one, until at last the dwindling army had scrambled across the Delaware into Pennsylvania, and people at Philadelphia were hiding their valuables and sending their wives and children into the country.

At last a letter came from St. John—written to Dorothea. She read it aloud to Aunt Anabel and Julian after dinner in the candlelit drawing room in Francis Street, her soft voice making fantasy of the disasters he had set down so matter-of-factly.

. . . There is no denying we have been weeks on the run and our reputation is no longer all that it might be [he wrote]. The army is melting away, companies at a time, partly because terms of service for the militia are up, partly by out-and-out desertion. We lack tents and blankets and even shoes for the ranks, and the men are sickening fast and becoming contentious. You cannot blame them for losing heart. Neither can you blame the commander in chief, who preserves a sort of leonine calm, to say nothing of a titanic resolve—but I suspect that he feels as strongly as the rest of us that the game may be pretty nearly up. Nevertheless he goes on hoping, appealing—I think praying—for reinforcements. If only we could scrape together a few stout hearts and a half dozen rounds of ammunition each, and if only the enemy could be taken by surprise, and if they all fell over their own feet and lost all their bayonets in the snow, we might just possibly contrive to dislodge them from one or two Jersey towns and capture some stores. I suppose there must have been a time once when my thoughts were not occupied almost exclusively with food, and when I would not have been willing to part with my hope of paradise in exchange for one of Jerusha's chicken pies. . . .

DOROTHEA raised stricken eyes from the page at this point. "You don't suppose he's really *hungry?*"

"Of course he's hungry!" cried Aunt Anabel impatiently. "He's starving, and cold, and discouraged, and *beaten,* and we sit here helpless, stuffed with good food!"

Dorothea felt for her handkerchief. "He doesn't say a word about coming home for Christmas," she lamented. "He could have had all he wanted to eat, and taken back some things, like ham, to the rest of them."

Christmas was to find St. John otherwise occupied. On a frosty day early in January all the bells in Williamsburg began to ring and the taprooms were soon full of hysterical citizens who pounded each other between the shoulders and stood each other a succession of drinks to celebrate the news that Washington had recrossed the ice-choked Delaware and attacked Trenton in a snowstorm. The Hessians' Christmas carouse was ruined, their commander, Rahl, was killed in the street fighting, the British line was cut at Princeton, and the redcoats were indeed dislodged from all but a precarious foothold at New Brunswick and Amboy.

It was March before another letter came from St. John, this time to Julian. It was full of an unself-conscious satisfaction that he had seen the action at Trenton and returned unscathed *with prisoners of war.*

After that letter they were a long time without one, and what news arrived from other sources was disquieting. Howe, who had gone to New York, left again in the early

summer by sea, presumably to attack Philadelphia; but Washington wrote to Governor Henry to put the Virginia militia on the alert in case the British should swing southward toward the Capes. Burgoyne was coming down with an army from Canada. The Continental troops evacuated Ticonderoga, as they could not hope to stand against him. July was full of suspense. No one, not even Washington, seemed to know what was going to happen, or where.

On an afternoon in September, Dorothea appeared suddenly at the door of the schoolroom where Julian was alone, working on copybooks.

She looked very lovely, in sprigged muslin and a wide hat.

"JULIAN, we've had news—I couldn't wait to tell you—Oh, Julian, Sinjie is coming home!" She laughed, and her breath caught, and she reached for his hand. "There's been a battle somewhere called Brandywine, and he got a ball in his foot. He says it's nothing, really, but he can't ride or even walk for some time to come, and he says— Oh, Julian, he's coming home!" Her soft brown eyes were shining with happy tears.

Smiling, saying small comforting things, he guided her to the front row of forms and set her down, and pulled up a chair to face her.

"It's very foolish of me to cry!" she struggled on, mopping at herself with a damp bit of cambric. "But I am so happy. I hope he isn't in pain, but at least he will have a good rest here, and proper food again, and Dr. Graves can see to the wound— Oh, Julian, you *will* be glad to see him, just like old times?"

"Yes, my dear; I'll be very glad to see him. Who won the battle?"

"The battle?" Joy died in her. "Washington is retreating—toward Philadelphia."

"Again?" he sighed. "That sounds bad, doesn't it?"

"Julian—" She laid her hand on his sleeve. "Julian, what about Regina? If—if she knew about Sinjie being wounded, it might make a difference in the way she feels."

"Very likely it will"

"Julian—will you tell her—please?"

"But, my dear girl, surely it would be better if you—"

"No, Julian. Don't you see—you're his friend, and I'm only his sister. Whatever I say Regina brushes aside, because she says I don't understand. Perhaps she'd listen to you."

"What do you want me to say?"

"Just that he's coming home, wounded—and—he'll want to see her, and she must be kind again—she *must!* Oh, Julian, please try—"

"It's a little difficull for me, too," he said slowly. And she leaned forward to see his face, and then drew back at what she found there.

"Julian, you aren't—you haven't—you wouldn't come between them!"

"There's not much chance of that, I assure you."

Dorothea was on her feet. "I must go!" she gasped, and made for the door. "I'm sorry, Julian. I—didn't realize—"

"There's nothing to realize," he assured her patiently, following her toward the door. "Dorothea, you must believe that. It would be very embarrassing if you misunderstood. It's only—"

"I think I understand—quite well," she said breathlessly, and he caught her at the door.

"I will see her if you wish," he promised. "Dorothea, I'll do my best to bring them together again."

"They belong together," she whispered. "Oh, believe me, Julian, they do!" And she was gone.

Julian got his hat and set out very thoughtfully for England Street, wondering how he was to go about his mission. As he passed the apothecary's, running feet overtook him and the twins flung themselves at him, one on either side.

"Oh, Mr. Day, have you heard? Congress has fled Philadelphia again! They're saying down at the Raleigh that the British will march in this week! Does that mean the war will be over?"

He paused in the broad shady street, Kit holding his left arm, Tibby panting on his right, her hat hanging down her back by its ribbons. In the waiting eyes of both was the same shining confidence in his wisdom—whatever he said would be.

"The war won't be over until Washington surrenders," he said.

"There, Kit, I told you! Washington will go on fighting! Philadelphia is only a town," said Tibby. "We've still got Norfolk and Charleston!"

"Everybody's down at the Raleigh, sir." Kit tugged at him. "Come and hear what they're saying."

"I can't now," he said. "I'm on my way to England Street. Mr. Sprague has been wounded and is coming home to recover."

Kit and Tibby exchanged a knowing look.

"Brandywine," said Tibby. "Kit, you go back to the Raleigh and see what you can hear. I'm going to walk a ways with Mr. Day."

Julian shortened his step to hers.

"Will they be married now, do you think?" Tibby inquired, with her customary directness.

"I don't know. It's possible."

"*I* would have married him before he went," said Tibby, and Julian smiled at her slantwise and said "Would you?" with some doubt, and she nodded and pulled up her hat to shade her face. "If the man I loved was going to war," said Tibby (secretly thanking the Lord that he wasn't), "I wouldn't want him to go without—that is, I'd want him to have—anything he wanted of me—while there was time. Suppose Mr.

Sprague had been killed—*then* how would she feel?"

"You're very wise today, Tibby. How would you like to come in and give Miss Regina some advice?"

Tibby glanced up in surprise, for the ironical tone was not one she was accustomed to from him.

"Reckon I spoke out of turn," she murmured. "I was thinking, if it was you. I mean," she floundered, getting pink under the hatbrim, "I didn't mean to criticize Miss Regina —I only meant that if you love a man *enough*, you can't bear to have him be without anything you can give him—I should think. I should go down on my knees to him, if I were in her place, and promise to do everything he wished from now on!"

Julian set his forefinger under her chin and raised the flushed face to his sympathetic gaze.

"Why, Tibby," he said, "are you jealous of Miss Regina?"

"Sometimes I hate her!" she cried, and jerked her chin free and made him her curtsy and marched away from him.

JULIAN entered Regina's drawing room and blurted out his news about Brandywine with less finesse even that he might have done. Regina was startled and unhappy—he could see that—but anything beyond the concern due an old friend was quickly masked. Bunglingly he proceeded.

"Dorothea thought perhaps, in the circumstances—you would see him again," he suggested.

"Dorothea is a darling—but just a little dense, isn't she, to send *you* on this errand? Still, I should be grateful to her, I suppose, for this unexpected pleasure." He stiffened defensively. "Must you avoid me so?" she asked, and made a small imperious gesture toward the sofa beside her.

"Our paths do not cross in the ordinary way," he said, and sat down at the far end, warily, and inquired in his punctilious fashion after the health of her parents, while their glances sparred and their smiles grew a little fixed, and the devil who lived in Regina's proud, undisciplined spirit possessed her again.

If St. John had written to tell her of his wound, and made a suitable plea for a sight of her to restore him to health, Regina would have condescended. But that would not have been St. John. He wrote to Dorothea, and Dorothea sent Julian to plead for her brother, which was tactless and just the stupid sort of thing a schoolgirl like Dorothea would do, and if she could not learn better she deserved to lose him. Not that he was hers to lose, so far, but it was plain enough she wanted him, thought Regina cruelly, her eyes on Julian's hands—big but beautiful, with thin boyish wrists—hands very different from St. John's sinewy brown fingers, but nothing womanish about them, nothing soft. He would be very gentle always, very kind, very easily hurt. He would never hit back with a laugh, like St. John. There would be some satisfaction, when St. John came home a hero, in telling that one was going to marry somebody else. . . .

She had not noticed how long the pause was stretching, until Julian rose rather abruptly and said he must go.

"But I never see you any more," she complained, and held out both her hands to him, rising as she yielded them to his clasp.

"Presumably that makes my life a little easier," he smiled, holding her hands.

"I think that's rather rude of you!"

"Don't imagine I enjoy it, though —denying myself even the sight of you while days I can never live again slip away empty."

Her fingers curled warm and close in his, for this was more the way she wanted him to talk.

"Then why deny us both our simple pleasures?" she murmured. "I've missed you, Julian. One hasn't so many friends, these days, one can afford to miss them. We *are* friends, aren't we?"

"Not exactly."

"You're very strange today. What am I to think?"

"You know quite well what to think. We can't be friends because you go to my head like wine. And the only thing for a man to do who cannot carry his liquor is to shun the bowl."

"You are full of moralities, aren't you, Julian!"

"Perhaps because I am a schoolmaster."

"DO you feel like a schoolmaster—always?" Her hands laid his behind her waist, he felt the wire of her hoop yield against his side, her face was upturned to his. For a moment, with a roar of blood in his ears, he hesitated, and then said quietly:

"You quarreled with St. John, didn't you? Are you using me as a stick to beat him with?"

It was so exactly the truth that she could not deny it.

"St. John made his choice between me and Washington," she said. "Let him abide by it."

"Won't you see him?"

"No. Not even to please you. And I would like very much to please you, Julian."

A moment more he stood with his hands clasping her waist, while his gaze caressed her face and throat.

"Then let me go," he said, and stepped back and kissed her hands which clung to his, and walked out without a backward look.

So she had nothing to tell St. John, after all.

ST. JOHN arrived home in a ramshackle dogcart drawn by an emaciated horse which he drove himself—transportation was scarce in the North. His uniform was shabby and battle-stained, his wound was painful from lack of care, and the British were in Philadelphia. But St. John's spirits were high, he was full of hilarious stories, and referred to his bulbously bandaged foot as the gout. He said little about how he had got his wound, beyond remarking that the first he knew of it he had a bootful of blood. He said that Lafayette had had a similar experience. He loved to tell about the young French marquis recently added to Washington's official family. Lafayette's belief in the cause of freedom burned like Washington's own, and he was already regarded almost as a son by the commander in chief. He was as tall as Washington, barely twenty years old, and charming.

The drawing room in Francis Street liked to hear about de Kalb, too—the gigantic gallant German who had accompanied Lafayette from France. De Kalb had served so long with the French army he ranked as one of its officers, and had been in America in 1768 as an agent of de Choiseul. St. John said the people who laughed at de Kalb were all wrong. True, he wore an old Swiss hat, and his hair was caked with powder and had a ludicrous black pigtail sticking out behind—but Frederick the Great, no less, had praised his generalship.

Meantime, St. John's new uniforms with a captain's epaulets arrived from the tailor and became him mightily.

He never mentioned Regina. He asked after Tibby, though, and when she came round to see him he devoted himself to her for an hour.

After nearly a year away, St. John was conscious of undercurrents. His precious Dorothea was quieter than he liked, and seemed inclined to leave him alone with Julian, and avoided the subject they had always spoken freely of—Regina's place in their future. Julian was quite himself—perhaps a little remote still, but with the exercise of tact they slipped again into the old easy ways. And Tibby? St. John pondered Tibby, staring into the fire with his foot on a hassock and a pipe between his lips—her direct green-

"You know all about ships, admiral—can you explain this?"

ish gaze and straight shoulders, her gentle speech and obstinate chin. She was growing up, he realized.

Dorothea came in and laid a caressing hand on his shoulder, and his went up to cover it.

"Oh, Sinjie darling, I *tried* to make her change her mind!" she cried impulsively, for she supposed that he brooded over his wayward love. "I thought surely when she heard you had been wounded it would bring her to her senses!"

He smiled, and laid aside his pipe, and pulled her down onto the broad arm of the chair.

"That was subtle of you!" he said affectionately. "What did she say when you told her?"

"Well, I—I didn't tell her. I asked Julian to."

"Poor Julian," murmured St. John. "He couldn't have enjoyed it much."

"I was stupid. I didn't realize till after I'd asked him that he was in love with her."

The strong brown fingers that caressed hers were suddenly still. Too late, Dorothea knew that for once St. John had been taken by surprise—that she had given something away. She sat paralyzed, with her hand in his, waiting for the sky to fall on her. And St. John said nothing at all. At last she could bear it no longer, and slipped to her knees beside the chair, with her face hidden in her arms flung across his lap.

"Oh, Sinjie, forgive me! I shouldn't have told you. I didn't think what I said—I thought you knew. I—Sinjie, it's as bad for me as it is for you!" she sobbed, all her defenses gone.

Still he did not speak, and she raised her face, wet with tears, to look at him. His eyes were fixed on the fire.

"Sinjie, don't look like that! I don't think it's come to anything—yet."

"No; it won't come to anything," he said quietly.

"You mean you can put a stop to it?" she asked hopefully.

He turned his head then and smiled at her, looking deep into her trustful eyes. Put a stop to Regina's willful whims, perhaps. He had done that before. But how to put a stop to his surging anger at her savage selfishness, her wicked, witless pride, which took no heed of anything but her necessity to make him sorry he had crossed her? And how to master that anger, quick and hot, at Julian, who should have known better, who should have been too clever to play moth to her flame? True, he had warned Julian before he went North, but only as a precaution, a crossing of fingers against the highly improbable thing which seemed to have happened, after all. As for this soft beloved creature in his arms, he would have given a year of his life for the answer. But you cannot challenge your best friend because he will not see your sister.

"You—you won't ever let him know?" she pleaded.

"It's a thing a man likes to find out for himself," he told her.

"He has to look, first. Oh, if only this war would end! Because, with you here at home again, she'd never dare lead him on! Sinjie, it would be all wrong. Even if I didn't love him so myself, I should hate to see him marry Regina. She'd only make him miserable. She'd *trample* on him, and he wouldn't know what to do."

"I know," he nodded, still with that odd smile. "Regina wants a beating every now and then. And I'm the man for that!"

"Oh, Sinjie, you c-couldn't—" She paused, round-eyed, for a short, hard laugh escaped him.

"She knows I could," he said. "She knows I *would*. It's the same thing!" He reached for his pipe, and filled it. "I will go so far as to wager with you," he said, "that Regina will not marry Julian. She would like to, just to spite me now. But it's very unlikely all the same, if I survive the war. And there's another thing, my dear. If it goes on—and it will—you'll see Julian in a uniform like this one yet! In which case, he too will be cast into outer darkness while the war lasts!"

"I suppose he will take that very hard," she reflected.

"He always takes things hard," said St. John sadly. "He's going to take this war very hard. We must be patient."

"I never meant you to know," she whispered obscurely comforted.

"I knew," he said. "But it's getting complicated." (Very complicated, with singlehearted Tibby growing up before their eyes!)

THEY were still sitting by the fire when Julian was announced and stood looking at them gauntly from the doorway.

"Burgoyne has surrendered at Saratoga," he said in a dazed sort of way. "His whole army. They are saying at the Raleigh that now France will come in on our side. That's good news, too."

Burgoyne—yes, great news. And France—wonderful! But St. John leaned forward, his eyes ablaze on Julian's face.

"On *whose* side?" he demanded. "On *whose* side did you say?"

"On ours, of course," said Julian. "America's!"

Will Julian's change of heart affect Regina's feeling for him? And what of Dorothea—and Tibby? Don't miss the next dramatic chapter in this stirring novel of love and war.

they played cribbage or read aloud to each other.

"That's much better," she said, her eyes slanted with amusement.

He started to look inquiringly at her, but he knew what she meant, and she knew that he knew it, so he merely smiled again and suddenly felt better, more relaxed. "I was in a foul mood," he admitted.

He had not wanted to come, yet he stayed on for the buffet supper. Later he had a moment alone with Lane, helping her get ice from the kitchenette. She kissed him quickly. "Darling Alex! I do love you."

"Lunch tomorrow?" he asked urgently, and she nodded, her dark eyes warm and luminous. He had not wanted to come, and now he did not want to go, because going meant leaving Lane. It seemed wrong and crazy for him who loved her so to be going away like any other guest.

"Alex, will you take Hetty home?" Lane asked. "She lives near you."

Saying good-by to Lane and Pete, seeing them standing side by side, still husband and wife, plunged him back into that pit of misery.

"DO you think it's too far to walk?" Hetty Lancaster asked.

"Not if you don't," he answered, and their footsteps rang on the empty pavement. On Fifth Avenue traffic lights still flashed their red and green signals to emptiness and solitude. A few people, lovers and dejected solitary men, sat on the benches in Washington Square.

They had not, Alex realized, exchanged a word in the whole walk, but Hetty's smile, as they stopped before her apartment house, absolved him of a sense of guilt. She was an understanding little thing, he reflected comfortably, and then, less comfortably, wondered exactly how understanding she was. After all, she was Pete's cousin, not Lane's.

"Good night," she told him. "It was a nice walk."

He turned back, and his thoughts reverted at once to Lane. They could not go on like this any longer. Tomorrow he must make her admit that. Tomorrow, at lunch, if it took all afternoon. . . .

They had always quarreled in this particular restaurant, and today Alex selected it deliberately. It was so far out of the way of everything that few people lunched there, and those who did had the furtive excited look of people who had chosen it for that reason. Lane wrinkled her nose as they entered the dark low-ceilinged front room, in the basement of an old house, where a few tables with checked cloths and an ancient player piano made pretense of being a café. Diners passed through the kitchen, fragrant of garlic and cooking wine, to the restaurant in the rear.

"Let's eat out here," said Alex.

"Trying to make it as grim as possible?" she asked, smiling.

"Trying to be comparatively alone with you," he corrected. "Lane, this can't go on. We've got to tell Pete."

"We're going to tell Pete," she said patiently. "But not yet, Alex."

His mouth set stubbornly. "Good Lord, Lane—"

"Darling." She put her hand, slender and white with rose-tinted fingernails, over his. "For one thing, I want to wait until things quiet down at the store. I can't cope with a spring advertising campaign and a domestic upheaval at the same time."

Alex stared at her. Her lovely mouth was curved in a smile, as though she had uttered some lovely speech; her soft eyes were tender. They dropped to the watch on her wrist. "As a matter of fact, we'd better order right away. I haven't much time."

"Lane," he said, "are you crazy? Do you think you can put off emotions?"

"One has to be practical, darling," she told him. "I'm due for another raise—" His eyes stopped her. "Don't look at me like that, Alex!" Beneath steady, accusing eyes, his mouth twisted into a smile.

"I wish to heaven I wasn't," he answered grimly. She was so beautiful and he had loved her so much. Now, all at once, he hated her. For more than a year he had been in love with her, and for three months she had said that she loved him.

"Alex," she said. "Alex!"

He snapped his fingers. "*Mademoiselle!*" he called, and a waitress appeared. "You don't want to be late," he reminded Lane.

ALEX and Hetty Lancaster were married on April twenty-first. They were married quietly, with only her father and a strange clerk as witnesses. They took no honeymoon, because the Brewster Paper Company, for whom Alex worked, had become almost overnight a defense industry. Wrappings for shells, casings for implements of war, faster and faster, more and more of them.

Alex had to work all day Saturday. In the evening, when he came home to the apartment she had found for them, he was tired and harassed.

"Your bath is drawn, sir, and your evening things laid out," she informed him, as he kissed her. He bathed and got into the clothes she had put out, a soft shirt and white duck trousers. The living room was cool and Hetty was sitting in a corner of the couch waiting for him with two frosted glasses festooned with fresh mint on the table before her. "Well?" she said.

He sank into an armchair. "If we could only chisel it into the dumb skulls of some of our manufacturers that this is an emergency!" he said vehemently. "You'd think they had all the time in the world. Speed—they don't know what the word means!" His words poured out irritably, and Hetty listened and nodded. Abruptly Alex laughed. "Mrs. Smith, are you really as interested in my ravings as you appear?"

"Of course," she answered. "They're *your* ravings, aren't they?"

HE looked at her, and a surge of tenderness such as he had never felt for any one swept over him. She was so pretty and so gentle. She was his wife, this young blue-eyed girl sitting there smiling at him. It was difficult to believe; he was not used to the idea yet.

"What did I ever do to deserve you?" he asked her huskily, and she came into his arms and lifted her soft cool face for his kiss.

"I love you," she told him.

"And I love you," he said. He held her tightly. "I'll never hurt you, Hetty."

"Of course not, darling," she agreed, her eyes bright and unclouded, like a child's eyes.

Her eyes were just as untroubled, her voice as serene a few days later when she said the words which Alex had been dreading: "Lane telephoned today, Alex. They want us to come for dinner."

He knew that they had to go. Once, for a long year, he had had to conceal his love for Pete Winkler's wife. Now it was equally important that he conceal his hatred toward her.

He had never discussed Lane with Hetty. After their final lunch, they had met only once, and then at Lane's insistence. "Darling," she had called him, in her warm rich voice, "are you giving me the gate?" "Oh, don't, Lane," he had protested, wincing. "If this had been right for us, you'd have told Pete months ago. It was never right, and you had the sense to know it." Her eyes had turned mocking. "You're not being a little gentleman, are you, Alex?" she had demanded. "Trying to persuade me that I'm turning you down?" It had not mattered. They had both known it was ended—ended, luckily for them both, before it had begun.

He had not seen Lane since. Six, seven weeks, and in that time his whole world had changed. He knew what Lane must think of his marriage. The hateful phrase, "caught on the rebound," would be written in her eyes when she looked at him and Hetty together. He knew that it was not true; knew that his love for Hetty bore no relation to the infatuation he had felt for Lane.

Lane said, "The bride and groom! Come in, children!"

Alex had never seen her look more beautiful. The chartreuse dinner gown had been molded to her lovely body, and heavy glittering jewels of antique paste hung from her ears, lay against the whiteness of her throat, encircled her bare arms.

"Hello, you pretty little thing," Pete was greeting his cousin. "Alex, aren't you ashamed to have a wife who looks like a child?"

"He bears up very well," Hetty answered.

Freddy Hill, his eyes mocking and malicious as always, stood behind Pete. "How's the parasite business?" he asked Hetty, and Alex's hands tensed.

"Blooming," Hetty said tranquilly, and smiled at her husband.

She did look like a child this evening in a long white dress, with white flowers in her hair, thought Alex. She looked innocent, and happy in her innocence. He felt the bite of his fingernails against his palms, and he lighted a cigarette. He must never hurt Hetty, he told himself, never let anything hurt her.

"THE oak looks pretty good, too," Freddy commented.

The oak. Lane and Pete took it up. *Give the oak some more salad, Lane. Hey, the oak hasn't got any butter.* . . . He must not show his irritation, Alex thought, because that was what Freddy and Lane wanted. Pete, the poor dope, did not realize that they were making fun of Hetty, and Hetty seemed as unaware of undercurrents as a kitten.

After dinner Hetty and Pete went out on the narrow balcony, and Pete returned briefly to the living room to gather an armful of pillows from the couch. "Us cousins have some private conversation," he said, as he closed the French doors behind him. Lane was smiling, sitting graceful and relaxed in a low armchair. She was smiling at Alex as though Freddy were not there at all.

"Happy, Alex?" she asked.

"Yes," he said shortly. But not, he thought, at the moment. He had been very happy from the first evening he had stopped in to call upon Hetty Lancaster, through all the evenings they had spent together. He had been happy, with a poignant pervading happiness, when she had said she would marry him. And he had been both happy and at peace the ten days of their marriage.

Lane's eyes were studying him, speculative and sultry. Alex looked abruptly at Freddy and saw that he was watching them both. Freddy Hill knew that he had been in love with Lane, and Alex wondered, with a sudden sharpness of suspicion, how much Lane had confided in Freddy, to what extent she had discussed their relationship with her business assistant. Freddy belonged to Lane, too, just as Pete belonged to her, and as he so nearly had belonged to her. Beyond the closed doors Hetty and Pete were talking, but here, in the dimmed-out living room, Freddy and Lane and he were making no pretense at conversation. There was something unpleasant and unhealthy in their silence and their mutual awareness.

"Aren't you happy, Lane?" he asked ironically. "Did you get your raise, by the way?"

She looked at him, and tears overflowed her eyes and streamed down her cheeks. She got up quickly and went into another room. Freddy Hill said, "Tut!" and the French doors opened and Pete and Hetty came in.

Lane's eyes were still unhappy when she said good night to them. Her lovely mouth was tremulous. Alex was silent as he and Hetty emerged on the sidewalk.

"Poor Pete," she said softly, and Alex stiffened.

"He's in such a mixed-up state of mind. He feels the war frightfully and feels he isn't doing anything."

"Oh," said Alex.

"It isn't as though Lane needed him. She makes twice as much money as he does and they have no responsibilities." She slipped her hand through his arm. "Would you like it better if I had a career?"

"No," he said. He looked down at her and smiled. "I'm your career, Mrs. Smith."

"Good," she answered. "I like it that way."

A WEEK after the dinner, Lane telephoned him at his office. "Alex, can you stop in on your way home?" she asked. "I've got to see you."

"I'm working pretty late these days," he said.

"Alex!" There was reproach and pain in her voice. "Truly, it's important. I'm almost crazy."

He was angry with himself when

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THE sacrifices that are needed in order to win the war are apparent to us all.

The Treasury's appeals to buy War Bonds, the Government's pleas to conserve gas and rubber, the economies required to avoid inflation, the necessity of rationing many essential commodities—all these have become vital in the minds of our people.

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he pressed her bell. Her did not want to see Lane alone, and his reluctance to face her troubled him. He should not care one way or the other, he told himself.

"Oh, Alex!" she said. "Thank you for coming."

She had been crying, but she looked very lovely in white silk lounging pajamas, with her dark hair loose and disheveled. He had never seen her with her hair undone; she looked younger, less secure, not at all the successful young executive.

"WHAT'S wrong?" he asked.

"Everything," she said. "And it's all my fault."

He repressed a smile. You're out of character, Lane, he told himself. Humility is not your line. "Where's Pete?" he inquired.

Her eyes filled with tears. "Pete is getting a commission in the navy," she answered. "He has also suggested that I take a trip to Reno."

Alex looked at her questioningly. "So what?" he asked.

"Why did you do it?" she demanded passionately. "Why did you fly off and marry that child, Alex? You knew I loved you. You knew—"

"Shut up, Lane," he said. "You're talking like a crazy woman."

"Maybe I *am* a crazy woman!" She caught his hand. "You were crazy, too! Why couldn't you have waited just a little longer?"

He looked at her steadily. "You're being dramatic. You're trying to make up something that isn't so."

Her hair was like a dark cloud about her white face. "I'm not pretending," she said. "I'm being honest. You're the one who's playing a role."

"No," he said. He put her hand down and walked away from her to the window. "I'm married, Lane, and that's that."

"You didn't think marriage was such a barrier two months ago!"

"I didn't think that you and Pete had a real marriage," he answered evenly. "Hetty and I have. You can believe it or not."

"Thanks," she said. "I don't believe it."

He shrugged. "I'd better go." He had not even sat down; his hat was still in his hand. "You're upset about Pete and everything," he added lamely. "You'll be all right, Lane." She was standing on the hearth before the fireplace which was banked with lilacs, her arms hanging limp at her sides. He patted her shoulder, and suddenly her arms were about his neck and his hat went spinning across the jade carpet. He felt her whole body shake with her sobs, and then her mouth was pressed against his mouth, and for an instant he held her close.

"Oh, Alex!" she breathed, her tears wet against his cheek.

He pushed her gently down into a chair and picked up his hat. Her eyes, watching him, were luminous and starry. "Good-by, Lane," he said, and went out.

His heart hammered as he strode down the sidewalk. He could still smell the warm fragrance of the lilacs and Lane's own perfume. He took out his handkerchief and wiped his mouth, and the red of Lane's lipstick stained the white linen. He swore and walked more swiftly.

Hetty was at the door as he turned his key in the lock. "I'm hot and dirty," he said, holding her off with one hand. "Don't even look at me until I've had a bath." He managed to grin as he went past her into the bedroom. He scrubbed himself savagely, washed his hair.

"Pete's joined the navy," Hetty told him when he emerged. "They're giving him a commission."

"Really?" said Alex, and shivered. *Really?* Why hadn't he said easily, "Yes, I know. I've just seen Lane"?

"He came in this morning," she continued. "He's like a different man, Alex. At peace with himself."

"Let's go out for dinner," said Alex abruptly.

Hetty's blue eyes showed a flicker of surprise. "All right," she agreed. "Wait until I turn off the oven."

Dinner and a moving picture. . . . "Want to stop in and have a drink somewhere?" he suggested. They stayed until two at a local night club, and went immediately to bed when they returned to the apartment.

THREE nights later, when Hetty met him at the door, she said, "Lane's here for dinner." Lane in a crisp black dress and sparkling costume jewelry, looking cool and competent and executive again. Lane being vivacious and gay, full of stories about the store, gossip of the city.

Lane being subtly critical of Hetty, delicately mocking.

"I've never known what a home girl did with twenty-four hours a day," she said. "What *do* you do, Hetty?"

"All the things you don't, probably," Hetty answered. "We might make out a pair of lists and check."

"Just housework, you mean?"

"And war work," added Alex defensively. "Hetty's an air-raid warden, and she does Red Cross one evening a week." Instantly he wished he hadn't spoken.

"When's your Red Cross night?" Lane was asking Hetty. "May I borrow Alex on the next one? A war widow has to work to find escorts."

After Lane had gone, Alex pulled Hetty into his lap and held her close. He wanted, desperately, to tell her about Lane, to tell her everything from the very beginning. She sat still, curled like a kitten against him, and he patted her soft hair gently. She was too little, too trusting for him to risk hurting her or worrying her. Lane Archer was his problem. He knew his own mind and his own heart; Lane could not alter that. He tipped Hetty's face up and kissed her.

LANE was his problem and he did not want to worry Hetty. That was why he did not tell Hetty that he had lunch with Lane one day when a business appointment left her near his office at noontime. She had telephoned and said, "Let me buy you lunch today, Alex." Throughout June it was tacitly accepted that on Hetty's Red Cross night Alex was Lane's escort. Once a week that was, yet by July Alex and Lane were meeting four and five times a week.

He honestly did not know how it had happened. He seemed unable to avoid any of their apparently accidental meetings. No one, he was sure, would believe how often he ran into Lane Archer on the streets of New York, how often she would laugh and say, "It's fate, Alex. Let's have one cocktail together before you go home to the little woman."

He honestly did not know how it happened that he kissed Lane good night, once a week, when he left her at her door. The first time, she had lifted her lovely face and asked him to kiss her, and protest or refusal had seemed more absurd than acquiescence. It had been an innocent enough kiss, the cool unlingering kiss of friendship. "Good night, darling," she had said. Lane called every one darling. The evening when they had driven, in Lane's car, to the Lewisohn Stadium and returned, drenched with music, to the quiet of Gramercy Park, she had said, "Come in a minute, Alex. I want to show you some drawings I've had made for the store. They're really remarkable." "Etchings?" he had asked teasingly, and she had laughed, opening the door. "Would you be interested?" she demanded. Abruptly, fiercely, she slammed the door behind them and wheeled about, her laughter gone, her eyes smoky, her lips soft and inviting. "Oh, darling, I never see you alone!"

Later, walking home to the apartment, he told himself that he would not see Lane again. He must not see her again. And when she did not telephone him the following day, or the day after that, he called her and said, "What about a short one at Tony's?" There was triumph in her eyes and defeat in his when they faced each other.

"You see, darling," she said, putting her slender hand over his, "we can't do anything about it. It's ironic that now that I'm free, you're tied. You've got to tell Hetty, Alex."

"No," he said. "No, Lane," he repeated, and she shrugged.

THE twentieth of July fell on a Monday. Lane telephoned him at his office in the morning, her voice eager and a little breathless. "Darling, tomorrow is the last day we go freely on wheels. I'm going to take the day off and drive up to Watch Hill to see the Parsons. Can't you arrange to come with me?" "No," he said. "Oh, Alex! We'd have such fun!" "I can't possibly, Lane." "Please, darling!" "No," he said. The beginning of gas rationing was July twenty-first. On July twenty-first he and Hetty would have been married three months. He told Lane so, flatly. "Hetty's like a kid about anniversaries," he added. "You seem to remember the date yourself." Lane commented. "Please, Alex, don't be silly." "Sorry," he said. He was smiling grimly when he replaced the telephone. The Parsons were amusing, the trip would be fun, but it was not impossible to say No, even to Lane. No and no and no. . . .

He was whistling when he let himself into his apartment. "Hetty?" he called.

She looked up, with her quick smile, from a chair by the open window. "Hello," she said. "I'm too hot to move." He kissed her, and her lips were cool, her cheeks were cool and fresh. "Do you mind eating out tonight?" she asked. "I thought we might go to a movie."

"Sure," he agreed. He felt vaguely disappointed. All day he had looked forward to the evening, to one of Hetty's good dinners and the cool quiet of their living room. The restaurant where they dined was noisy and crowded; the music was dull. Hetty yawned as they came out. "I don't know why I'm so tired today," she said. "I'm going to take a shower and go straight to bed."

He pretended, in the morning, not to remember that they had been married for three months. In the afternoon he telephoned her. "Don't get dinner, Hetty. We're going out. Full dress." He spent nearly an hour in a jeweler's store, looking for something that should belong to Hetty. Most of the jewelry reminded him of Lane, of Lane and all the other successful young career women who were like her.

"That's it!" he said suddenly.

"It's a dainty piece," the clerk agreed. "Notice how the stones are strung together."

IT was a chain of topazes linked with a delicate filigree of thin gold. And at the florist's, the two sprays of golden butterfly orchids he bought looked as though they had been created by the same artist.

"They're lovely, Alex," Hetty said, when he gave them to her.

"Put them on," he ordered. She was already dressed, in a long pale green chiffon gown. Solemnly she pinned one of the flower sprays to the shoulder of her dress, tucked the other in her soft hair. "You look like a nymph," he said. "Don't I get a kiss?"

"Yes. But you mustn't muss me, please."

He was puzzled. "You feel all right?" he demanded.

"Of course," she answered. "Go get dressed, Alex."

At dinner they had champagne. "It's just the color of your necklace," he said. She nodded, and again he

"It's Christmas, sir!"

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felt puzzled and disappointed. "Hetty, is anything wrong?"

She smiled. "You'd better get the check, Alex. I hate to be late for the theater."

Through the two long acts of the musical comedy he was scarcely aware of the stage. Beside him, Hetty laughed and applauded, yet she seemed a stranger. She seemed remote and secret and unlike herself. Her hand was tucked through his arm when they came out to the sidewalk. They taxied to a night club, danced, had more champagne.

"Alex, I want to go home," Hetty said abruptly.

"I'll call the waiter," he agreed. But she shook her head.

"No, I don't mean now. I mean home to my father."

He stared at her. "Aren't you happy, Hetty?"

She laughed. "What's happy?" she asked flippantly. "Who's happy?"

"I thought that we were."

"Did you?" Her eyes were overbright, the color high in her cheeks. "Alex, there's been a lot of talk about my being a clinging vine, hasn't there? A parasite. I guess I started it myself, just to be smart. And then—people—took it up. I'm tired of it." She sipped her wine. "Maybe it's true. Maybe it isn't. And maybe if it is, it's true that you're not quite a sturdy enough oak."

He started as though she had slapped him. "Hetty—"

"Don't let's talk about it here," she interrupted him. "I might cry."

She did not look as though she were going to cry. There was a hardness in her face he had never seen before. Resentment flared within him. He had tried to make this evening an occasion. He had said no to Lane; he had bought Hetty presents, done everything he could to make her happy and pleased. She was spoiling their enjoyment, not he. She was doing it deliberately.

"Would you care to dance?" he inquired politely.

"Yes," she said, and she was a stranger in his arms as they moved together to the music.

HIS resentment had become a cold lump of anger by the time he escorted Hetty to the station and her train. No rails could take her farther away from him than she had already removed herself. "I hope you have a pleasant visit," he said.

"Thank you, Alex," she said.

It was too late to return to the office, and he had no desire to go back to the empty apartment. His mind pretended that he was merely taking a walk, while his legs propelled him south and west toward Gramercy Park. Outside Lane's building he stopped and reflected. If Hetty wanted to go off for no reason at all, he was surely free to see whom he liked, he told himself.

Freddy Hill was there, shaking a cocktail. "The oak himself!" he murmured.

Maybe you're not quite a sturdy enough oak, Hetty had said. What in thunder had she meant by that?

"The oak thirsts," he retorted.

"Water the oak," ordered Lane. "Sit down, Freddy. You have time for one more drink, haven't you?"

ALEX caught the sardonic glint in Freddy's eye. You're dismissed, Freddy. You're *de trop.* You work for Lane; she could discharge you if she liked. He looked at Lane appraisingly. You're very beautiful, my dear, but you're hard. Ruthless.

Her telephone rang. She went to answer it. "Darling! Yes, of course." Her warm voice rose and fell.

"So the vine is on vacation," Freddy murmured.

Alex started. How could Freddy Hill know that? Lane said, "Be seeing you, darling," and came back. She looked at Freddy, smiling, and he reached for his hat.

Alex leaned against the mantel and looked down at her. "Hetty's gone home for a visit," he said.

Lane's lashes stirred. "How lovely!" she exclaimed.

"Is it?" he asked.

"It is for me," she answered. She added softly, "I hope."

He continued to look down at her. He felt impersonal, detached. "What do you hear from Pete?" he asked.

"Oh, Alex!" she said.

He lighted a cigarette.

"Let's go somewhere," she suggested abruptly. "Somewhere gay, with music."

He smiled. "'Madder music and stronger wine,' Lane?" His lips continued to smile. "'I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.'"

She stood up. "Come on, Alex. Let's get out of here."

He was motionless. "Let's not," he said. "Let's pretend that we're married. You tell me about your day at the office."

MAN POWER

My soldier's in an army camp;
My sailor's on the sea.
This town's still full of men, but oh,
The difference to me!

—JOSEPHINE FELTS.

FOOTNOTES

Double feature.

"I could tell you plenty about it," she said, and stopped, looking down at him uncertainly.

He lifted his forefinger. "Sh-h-h!" he said. "Don't interrupt. I'm having visions."

The lilting words of Dowson's poem still rang in his head. He had not been unfaithful to Hetty. He never would be, he realized. He wondered whether Hetty knew that. He caught his breath sharply, because he was having visions, because he could almost see Hetty Lancaster—here in this room where he had first seen her, could almost hear her cool voice saying, "I saw you this afternoon with Lane." It had never before struck him as odd that Hetty had not been curious about Lane and himself. It seemed odd now, only for an instant, because almost at once he understood why. Hetty had known.

"Lane, what did you say to Hetty?" he demanded.

Her eyes were veiled. "When?" she asked.

He thought for an instant. It would have been on Monday, of course. Monday, after she telephoned him. "What did you tell her?" he insisted.

Lane sat down. "You didn't seem to have the courage," she said defensively. "It's only fair to the kid to tell her the truth."

For a second Alex was tense with anger. "Only fair," he repeated. "Yes, you're right about that." He looked at his watch. Hetty had been more than three hours on the train. If he could get a plane to Springfield . . .

"May I use your phone?" he asked.

"Yes," Lane said. . . .

Hetty had wired her father that she was coming. When Alex reached the railroad station at Southridge, Professor Lancaster was waiting on the platform. He blinked in surprise when he saw his son-in-law.

Alex explained briefly. "I'm not going to cheat you out of a visit from Hetty," he added. "I have to be in New York tomorrow, and there's a train in two hours. I just want to talk to her first."

Hetty's father smiled. "Suppose I go back to the house on foot and leave the car here for Hetty?"

They shook hands, and the headlights of the engine lighted the tracks as Professor Lancaster turned away.

Alex swallowed as he watched Hetty descend from the car, look up and down the dim platform. He went toward her slowly.

"Alex!" She stopped short, staring at him incredulously.

Behind her the dark length of the train moved slowly forward. Lighted windows went by like a string of square beads, blurring into an oblong glow against the night.

"I've been a fool, Hetty," he said. "Not so much as you think, though."

She was clutching his arm as though she still did not believe that he was really there. "How did you get here?"

"I flew." Hetty's upturned face looked small and pale, her eyes seemed enormous. "I don't know what Lane told you, but it isn't true," he said.

SHE did not speak, and the night sounds of the country were loud about them, tree toads and, from the woods behind the tracks, the voice of an owl.

"I should have told you about Lane in the beginning, but I didn't think there was anything to tell," he went on steadily. Hetty closed her eyes and bent her head forward abruptly, butting against his chest like a little animal. "Hetty!" he said. "Are you crying?"

Her voice was muffled against his coat. "I don't think so. If I am, it's only because I'm happy." She was holding him with both hands, clinging to him with all her weight, while he stood straight and firm. "I didn't really believe it, Alex, but I knew if you wanted her, I couldn't want you. I had to find out. I thought if I went away—" She swayed.

His arms tightened about her. He felt strong and powerful, as though he were rooted there. He felt as though he could stand so forever, holding Hetty, supporting her.

"You can't go away from me," he said. "Didn't you know that?" Suddenly he laughed. When Freddy Hill had said it first, he had resented it hotly. When Lane caught it up, he had been embarrassed and annoyed. Now he said it himself, proudly, with a surging excitement at its importance and significance, "I'm the oak."

THE END

How Much Do You Owe Uncle?

Continued from page 13

the nature of your employment—you will have to fill out a tax return, and you will owe the nation $15. This is in addition to the Victory tax being deducted from your 1943 income, which tax will amount to nearly $30.

2. If you are a married man with no dependents, or a married woman with separate income, you will have to make a return if you earned as much as $1,500, or about $29 a week. And you will owe the government $48, plus $78 Victory tax.

3. If you are married and have two children and earned $2,000 in 1942—about $39 a week—you will owe $13, plus $100 deducted from your pay by Victory tax.

As income increases the tax increases by leaps and bounds. In Class 3, for example, if you earned twice $2,000—or $4,000—you will *not* owe twice $13, or $26. You will owe $378, plus Victory tax of $200.

This is because of the system of surtaxes. Everybody wants his share of the burden, of course. But the Congress has decided that the man or woman earning high wages should bear, proportionately, a much heavier burden than the man or woman on a mere living wage. The man in Class 3 who made $10,000 in 1942 will have to pay $2,200 of it into the Treasury. However, the rate of the Victory tax does not change with increasing incomes as the regular income-tax rate does. As Victory tax, the $10,000 man will owe the same 5 per cent—or $500—in addition to the $2,200.

THE indications are that no salaries above $25,000 a year will be allowed at all. And business corporations must pay in taxes 90 per cent of everything they earn above fixed charges and a legally established return on investment.

Paying your income tax for the first time, you are eager to do your fair share, but you naturally want to be certain that people who make more money are doing theirs. Let me assure you that they are.

The printed form of the income-tax return is much simplified this year. It will be easy to understand and to fill out. If you have paid income taxes in the past, mark well that the so-called family exemptions have been reduced. This year the single person may deduct only $500. The married person may deduct only $1,200, and an additional $350 for each dependent.

Let us suppose that you earned

in 1942 exactly $2,500. You are married and have two minor children. At the place indicated on the tax blank you will mark down your exemptions: $1,200 for being married, and $700 for having two children. So then, out of your $2,500 income, there is $1,900 upon which you need not pay tax at all—and $600 upon which you must. If your return is wholly uncomplicated, the tables on the blank itself will show you that you owe $99 in regular income tax, in addition to your Victory tax of $125.

But there are certain details which complicate almost every return. These are the deductions to which many people will be entitled under the law. Put down for deduction, in the spaces provided, such things as:

Your gifts to charity.

The interest you paid on debts, such as the interest on the house you are buying by installments, or on a loan.

State income taxes you paid last year, and also the total of state or local taxes on gasoline and oil, cigarettes and theater tickets.

State or local sales taxes you have paid.

The cost of repairing damages to your property, if they were caused by a natural catastrophe such as a flood, not by normal wear and tear.

NOBODY can deduct the amounts paid in *federal* taxes, whether income tax or manufacturing tax or taxes on gasoline or on cigarettes and other forms of tobacco.

On the other hand, all of us get a new deduction this year. We are allowed to deduct the costs of *unusual* medical expenses. This does not mean the ordinary payments to the family doctor. It means the unexpected burden of sudden illness, the need for hospitalization or surgery. The total of such deduction is limited to 5 per cent only of the *net* income.

Also, money paid out in premiums for health and accident insurance policies may be deducted.

We do not have to concern ourselves with the actual payment of this federal income tax until March 15, 1943. On that date not only the return—the blank, properly filled in—must be delivered to the Collector of Internal Revenue, but the tax itself. Not all of it, of course. We can pay one fourth of it with the return, and the remaining fourths on June 15, September 15, and December 15. We must, however, concern ourselves right now about saving against the bill which our country will present to us on March 15. The best way is to take out of each pay envelope a planned amount of money and tuck it away to pay income taxes.

STRICT honesty is the only sensible policy when it comes to federal taxes. "Chiseling" is quite impossible. There are very clever men whose business is to bring to book those who try.

Besides, we should all remember that since 1940 our Congress has appropriated more than 200 *billion* dollars for the national defense. You may be sure that the Germans and Japs and Italians are quite as stunned as we are in the contemplation of that amount. Our taxes, our purchases of War Bonds must provide the money. And those same taxes will buy us not only freedom and survival but self-respect.

What the federal government calls excise taxes are the third method of acquiring revenue for the national Treasury. Most people call them hidden taxes. They are tacked on to virtually everything you buy, every public service you use. In normal times they take up about one fifth of the money you spend. Not all of this goes into the federal Treasury. Here, however, we are concerned only with federal taxes.

Back in the days of peace, if you bought a new car, 3 per cent of the price you paid was federal tax—with a similar tax on new tires and all accessories. You also paid the federal government a penny for every gallon of gasoline—and you still do. But there aren't any more new automobiles and gasoline is rationed, so the taxes on motoring have dropped off severely.

To make up for this difference, the new tax bill has increased excise taxes on other things. You pay fifty cents more for a bottle of whisky. You pay 7 cents, in tax, for a package of cigarettes instead of the 6 cents you paid a year ago. The tax on telephone service is now 10 per cent instead of 5, and there is the same increase on tickets for trains or buses or airplanes.

Those are the most important increases. But the old hidden taxes are still there. Insurance companies pay $100,000 a year in taxes, which are passed on to you in the premiums. Cooking gas and electric current, shoes and nightshirts and parlor rugs have taxes included in the prices you pay for them.

WE can pay those taxes, and we will pay them without raising too much of a stew about it, because so very much is at stake. But in the better world we are fighting for, one of the things we certainly can do without is hidden taxes. Such taxes were not instituted, originally, with deliberate intent to deceive. But in peacetime the congressmen who vote for increased *direct* taxes are likely to be defeated at the polls. So it is politically expedient to pile on the indirect taxes, the hidden ones.

It should be our insistent contention that all taxes should be clearly marked as taxes. At present we may say to our congressmen, particularly to the newly elected ones: We do not mind the new taxes, either the Victory tax or the income tax or the excise tax. We shall pay them with a will. But let that willingness be a lesson to you. We do not have to be fooled into paying them. We are men enough to put the money on the line when we know it is needed.

Certainly, Mr. Representative Disney, we *are* tax-conscious today. It was only the timidity of Congress in imposing hidden taxes that kept us from being tax-conscious long ago. We know now that the best and most realistic thing we can do is to pay our share openly into the common cause upon which all of us are launched.

THE END

DIRECT HITS

BY ROBERT ORMOND CASE

Note to the new Congress: In the family called Democracy, no boy is too big to be spanked.

Joe Doakes, the average citizen, isn't much worried. In the matter of cigars, beer money, and nights out with the boys he's a lifetime veteran of rationing.

Last fall, reporters approached an aged warrior of the Yakima tribe with the annual question: "Is it going to be a hard winter?" The answer, based on natural lore, always made good copy. Salmon running late in the rapids meant a mild winter, squirrels gathering an unusual amount of nuts meant a long cold spell, etc.

This time the ready reply was: "Bad winter."

They asked him why, pencils poised. What signs had he observed?

"Me watch white man," said the inscrutable old renegade. "White man put in plenty wood."

One of the famed Flying Tigers—the handful of U. S. pilots who dusted more than 300 Jap planes off the China sky—recently mentioned a heart-warming detail.

He was describing an aerial combat with a vicious Zero fighter. Both were a mile up, headed vertically down, when a wing of the American's P-40 locked with that of his opponent. What to do?

Said he: "I remembered what the Old Man [now Brigadier General Chennault] told us about the P-40s: 'When the pinch comes, they're tough.' So I gave it the gun and made a power dive, straight down, wide open. Sure enough, the Zero folded like tissue paper."

Our pilot wasn't alone in the cockpit that day. Roaring down to victory with him was every man and woman on the P-40 assembly line.

It's a mistake, of course, to waste much time worrying about what may happen after we win the war. Nevertheless, if you can't help worrying, let's take a quick sight-seeing trip into the future. Suppose the granddaddy of all economic crashes follows in the wake of peace. It wipes out all our savings, our monetary system, all bonds, stocks, life insurance. A crash to end all crashes.

Assuming that we successfully defend our freedom, that is the worst that could happen. So let's pick ourselves up and start from there.

First curious fact to emerge is that the "catastrophe" has wiped out all public and private debt. We have no cash, but we owe nothing. (We're not advocating that, mind you; we're merely taking stock.) Also, for what it's worth, we have a little nest egg comprising some 70 per cent of the world's gold.

But gold is nothing more than a convenience. In items of real value, what do we have?

Only this: The world's greatest (1) industrial plant, (2) concentration of raw materials, (3) concentration of power — oil, hydroelectric, coal, (4) block of agricultural land.

Those four items happen to comprise *all* that the ravenous "have-not" nations are fighting for.

Hitler knows, and undoubtedly chews rugs each time he sees the treasures slipping farther from his grasp, that one deposit on the shores of Lake Superior contains more iron ore than all Europe; that the *fifteenth* oil-producing state in the Union—Illinois—produces more oil than Rumania; that all the forests of Germany would not keep the sawmills of the Northwest supplied for a single year; that the Mississippi Valley alone could feed the English-speaking world.

The Mississippi Valley: When you fly from Pittsburgh via Chicago to Wichita—1,200 miles—the shadow of the plane falls *less than thirty consecutive seconds* on barren ground!

Certainly it will cost our accumulated wealth to defend what we have. To put it in pointed vernacular: So what? Never before have we faced an absolute battle for survival. If it takes every dime amassed since Plymouth Rock, it's cheap.

Lastly, all things are relative. If we enter the postwar period bankrupt, so will the rest of the world. Which will leave us precisely where we started: at the head of the parade. To glimpse what that means, balance our potentials against those of Italy. All Mussolini's gibberish cannot change this single astounding economic fact: In a normal year our domestic *income* is greater than the *total national wealth* of Italy.

So quit worrying, neighbor. Just win the war, and we'll get along.

Hokum, a good old American dish, gives spice to living in peacetime. In war, too much is dangerous.

The cautious man, for instance, will not allow himself to be built up as a hero solely because he is on the pay roll of a war industry. He is entitled to credit only if he is doing his best at his job to the limit of his capacity, jealous of each moment that finds him or his tools idle.

Otherwise, while American boys are tossing in jungle hospitals, he is merely earning twice as much as in peacetime, spending it on more luxurious living, and all in all, in a battle for survival is enjoying a very satisfactory free ride.

Win-the-war tip: If you want to kill time, says an anonymous correspondent in the American Legion Magazine, try working it to death.

A certain bomb should chuckle as it plunges down on some dodging Jap carrier. Essential metals from millions of keys go into these lethal projectiles. One bronze giant collected in the recent children's drive bore the legend: "Key to the City of Los Angeles." On its back was stamped: "Made in Japan."

The national scrap-iron drive produced an estimated 5,000,000 tons, which is about 40 per cent of the amount shipped to Japan prior to Pearl Harbor.

A West Coast manufacturer, armed with a war contract, went to Washington to get a priority on essential material. He had to have his request approved by *fourteen* alphabetical agencies. In two weeks he had thirteen signatures. The fourteenth balked—and persuaded five of the previous signers to renege. The manufacturer began again, this time with the fourteenth —who graciously conceded that he "hadn't grasped the picture"—and in ten days more he got his priority, having spent twenty-four days in all.

France fell in seventeen days.

CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS:
A day of all days in the year, when the best was none too good—the best food, the best presents, the best friends, the best fun. A turkey stuffed and spiced and roasted brown, and surrounded by all the good trimmings, and "carved" (each man according to his skill), and eaten—and washed down with good drink. A day of friends and relatives and visitors, and of children in the house being noisy; of electric trains and toy fire engines and dolls; of a tree that shed dry pine needles and shredded tinsel and broken ornaments on the floor. Devotions, perhaps, in the morning, but principally a day of cigars and toasts and laughter, of good food and good-fellowship and giving, with leisurely talk and maybe a nap in the afternoon, and later on a long stroll to "walk it off."

That was Christmas, 1940. That was Christmas, 1941. That was what many of us had come to think of as the "old-fashioned Christmas."

IN many if not most American homes, Christmas will not be like that this year. Many Americans will spend Christmas walking a lonely sentry trick in some far place, and wishing they were home.

Others will spend Christmas on deck watch over some godforsaken waste of water, and thinking of home.

Others will spend the day ducking bomb splinters and machine-gun bullets in the dust and heat and clash and hell and agony of battle; for war knows no holidays.

Others will spend the day amid the scorched-oil smell of a working lathe, with the heat and roar of a blast furnace, or with the crunch and clang of a drop forge; for factories on twenty-four-hour, seven-day schedules don't shut down on Christmas.

In some homes Christmas will be the sad day of the year, not the happy one. For on this of all days one wants to feel loved ones near, and their absence is most keenly felt.

And some homes will be tortured with the knowledge that the vacant chair is vacant forever and will never be filled again, and that one voice will always be eloquently missing from the Christmas clamor.

MANY of the things, then, that used to make up what we called the "old-fashioned" Christmas are gone. People may murmur that it doesn't "seem" like Christmas.

Indeed, if Christmas were only warmth and friendship and carols and the wassail bowl, there is not a great deal to be said for this one.

But perhaps, in shedding some of the trimmings of Christmas, we are growing closer to a deep realization of what the day really means.

Traditionally, we have set aside Christmas in remembrance of the birth, the teachings, the life of Christ. If there is one thing that life teaches us, it is this:

There are ideals more precious than life, even the "good" life, the kind that gave us the old-fashioned Christmas.

This a dreary Christmas?

No! This year we are not merely paying morning lip service to the eternal ideals Christmas stands for. This year we are living them, doing them, with all our strength and substance.

For that reason, it is in many ways the most glorious Christmas in our history.

Suppose this was your house, your pooch, your Baby!

What's to prevent that dreadfulness from happening here?

Men can't prevent it, unless those men have ships and guns and planes and shoes and chow. All these supplies and machinery of war cost *money*. Because in this country, there aren't any labor slaves; everybody gets *paid* in defense factories here.

So it takes money to fight a war. To keep ships going, and guns shooting, and soldiers eating. So that *they can* keep little houses standing, pups playing, kids like yours SAFE.

How to buy a share in Victory

Where's the money coming from?

YOU'RE going to chip it in, out of the money you are getting TODAY. Instead of spending it all, why not lend at least 10% to Uncle Sam? He'll put it to work for America. He will give you a written promise to pay it back in 10 years, with interest (2.9% a year). If that promise isn't good, *nothing's* good. But because this is America, it IS good.

How can you chip in?

By buying War Savings Bonds. You can buy one today for $18.75. It is worth $25.00 when Uncle Sam pays you back in 10 years.

INSTALLMENT payments?

Yes! If you can't spare $18.75 today, buy War Savings Stamps for 10¢ or 25¢ or 50¢. Ask for a Stamp book, save a bookful of Stamps, then exchange them for a War Savings Bond.

What IS a BOND?

A piece of legal paper, official promise from Uncle Sam that he'll pay you back your money plus interest. The Bond will be registered in your name. Keep it safely put away.

Can you CASH a Bond?

Yes, any time 60 days after you buy it, if you get in a jam and need money, you can cash a Bond (at Post Office or bank).

WHERE can you buy War Savings Bonds and Stamps?

At your nearest Post Office. At a bank. At many stores all over the country.

WHEN?

Our enemies have been getting ready for the past 7 or 8 years. Are you going to wait till they get *nearer* our kids?

★ *Buy War Savings Stamps and Bonds NOW!*

This advertisement has been prepared entirely as a patriotic gift to the Government. The art work, copy, composition and plating, as well as the space in this magazine, have been donated by all concerned as part of their effort toward helping win the War.

"IT'S IN THE BAG"–Says HI to HATT

This pack is filled with Kessler's for my Very best of friends—
Lucky guys—that silky drink's the Very best of blends
HI
HATT
MAY MORING

KESSLER'S
Private Blend
TO OPEN TURN DOWN
☞ Every label bears facsimile of my signature
KESSLER'S
Private Blend
BLENDED WHISKEY
BLENDED & BOTTLED BY JULIUS KESSLER DISTILLING CO. INC. BALTIMORE, MD. LAWRENCEBURG, IND

IT'S A TASTY PACKAGE!

"We done our share of travellin'
Around the U.S.A.—
From East to West we've tried the best,
An' now we're here to say
That silky Kessler's rates on top,
No matter where you go—
Just hand a friend this mellow blend
An' watch his friendship grow!"
(Signed) Mr. Hi and Mr. Hatt

KESSLER'S
BLENDED WHISKEY

KESSLER'S PRIVATE BLEND. 75% Grain Neutral Spirits. 85 Proof. Julius Kessler Distilling Co., Inc., Lawrenceburg, Ind.